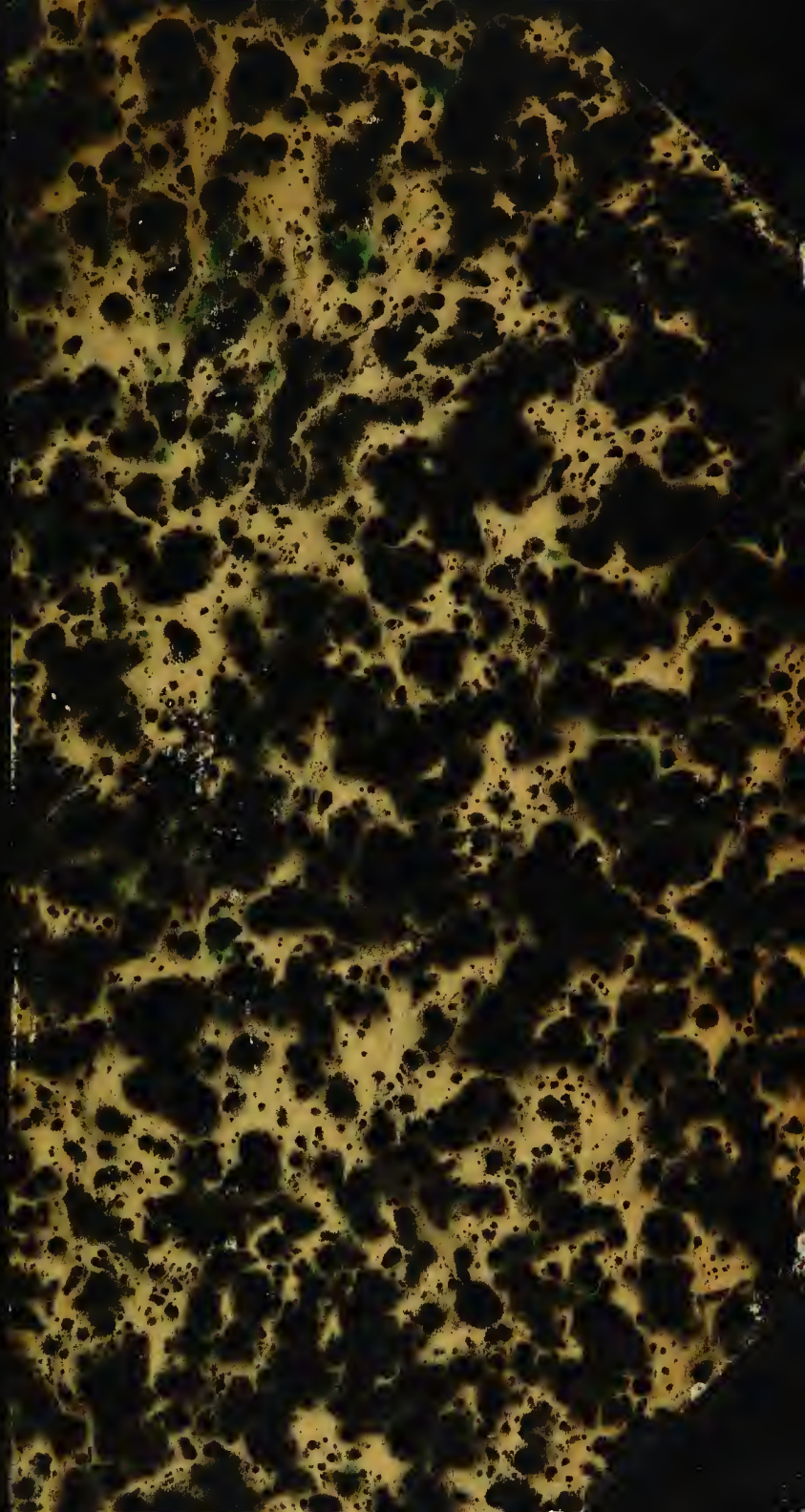


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A SCHOLAR OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

BY THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.



I.

NO RECORDS are more unsatisfactory, at least none have been more unsatisfactory, than those which purport to cast light upon the private lives of eminent men. Especially is this statement true in respect to individuals, no matter how otherwise distinguished, who have not been connected in some way with affairs of state. Little do we know of the greatest men of the past who have had to trust for the perpetuation of the facts of their personal history, not to official documents, but to the distinction they have gained in scholarship or letters, to the interest which the work they have done may have inspired in their contemporaries. Our information in regard to nearly all the celebrated authors of antiquity, who took no part in public affairs, is of the most meagre and unsatisfactory nature. Nor are we much better off when we come down to a period nearer the present. Of most of that brilliant group of dramatists who made the Elizabethan age illustrious, we can scarcely be said to know anything worth knowing. Facts and figures, often uncertain, and usually barren, comprise the principal part of the information contained in what are called their biographies.

It is hard for us to realize that this should be so. In the broad glare of light cast by the press of modern times upon the words and acts of the most inconspicuous; in these days, in particular, when no privacy, however secluded, no obscurity, however profound, can be trusted to save any one from the reporter that walks in darkness, or the interviewer that wastes at noon-day, it scarcely seems possible that the life of any man of great eminence could escape being known to contemporaries and handed down to posterity. Yet this will not appear so strange when we come to consider how little is the acquaintance most of us have with the details that make up the biography of the most conspicuous living men of letters. How many of the admirers of Tennyson, for instance, who for thirty years has occupied the foremost place in English literature, could give any but vague and fragmentary particulars of his personal history?

But however it may be at present, obviously the only certain way for a man of the past to make sure that his acts would be perpetuated was for him to write an account of them himself. Simple as the expedient may appear, it took ages to discover it. Antiquity seems to have known nothing of autobiography, strictly so called. In works like the Commentaries of Cæsar, the personal interest belonging to the man is entirely swallowed up in the more absorbing interest of the events he describes. The former is, indeed, so subordinate to the latter that it can scarcely be said to exist at all. In the genuine autobiography the man himself must be the center about which everything else revolves; and events that take place in his time are described only as they impart additional interest to his own words or deeds. The practice is now so common that it seems to us as if it must always have existed. Yet the work of which a slight account is to be given here, is perhaps one of the earliest of its kind known to literary history.

Among the chronicles and memorials of the Middle Ages, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, are several volumes of a scholar of the twelfth century, famous to some extent in his day, but now known by name only to few, and cared for by fewer still. Of his various writings the one that has for us any special interest here is that which goes under the title *De Rebus a Se Gestis*. It has unfortunately only been

preserved in part. Though the story is told in the third person, it is a genuine autobiography; and the work has even more interest than usually pertains to such productions. This is partly due to the fact that it belongs to a class of writings uncommon in that age, and having in consequence the attraction of rarity. But in addition, the excessive vanity of its author imparts that peculiar fascination which all individual characteristics, whether good or bad, exercise when exhibited in the full perfection of their greatness or their monstrosity. Moreover, the incidents and details interwoven with the personal narrative give frequently a vivid picture of contemporary life, of which from regular histories we should catch only the vaguest outlines. To some it may be of interest to get even a faint idea of a man, especially from his own point of view, who in his time was far from being an insignificant personage in the eyes of those with whom he came into contact, and in his own eyes was about the most important personage of his age. Full of egregious vanity, full of distorted facts, full of violent invective his statements are. But the very qualities that lower to a certain extent our estimation of the writer, have also the effect of imparting additional interest to what he wrote. For the accuracy of what he says he alone is responsible; our duty is done when we set forth in another tongue and with far less detail some of the incidents which he records.

Gerald de Barri was born in the castle of Manorbeer, in South-western Wales, about three miles from the town of Pembroke. The time of his birth is uncertain. It is, indeed, entirely a matter of inference, from declarations made by himself in his writings, as to his age in particular years. This, it might seem, would furnish information sufficiently satisfactory. Unfortunately it is not so. For in all his statements in regard to everybody and everything, Gerald de Barri invariably exhibited a generous disdain for mere dates and figures, which have made many of his assertions the despair of editors who have fettered themselves with frivolous habits of accuracy. The year of his birth, however, must have been in the neighborhood of 1147. Both on the spear and the spindle side he was of high descent. His father, William de Barri, was an important member of the Norman nobility. His mother belonged to one of

the most powerful Welsh families. His grandmother, the then somewhat celebrated, or at least notorious Nesta, was the daughter of the prince of South Wales, and before her marriage to Gerald de Windsor, the constable of Pembroke, had been the mistress of Henry I. of England: and there is unfortunately pretty conclusive evidence that she did not limit her favors either to her royal lover or to her husband. But in those times, and especially among the Welsh, the marriage bond pressed lightly. Raik, in particular, had privileges of its own in this respect, as well as in nearly every other. Nesta was the mistress of a king in days when the immorality of the act was lost in the grandeur of the eminence to which she had attained; and a portion of her glory shone by a reflected light upon her descendants, both legitimate and illegitimate. Certainly as regards this particular grandson, of whom we are speaking, his relationship with the highest nobility of his native country was the source of much both of the success and of the failure of his life.

Gerald de Barri is known to modern historians and students almost exclusively by the name of Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald the Welshman), in accordance with the then common custom of Latinizing proper names. This practice, suitable enough and even necessary in an age when every educated man wrote and spoke Latin, is in a measure preserved for us still in the triennial catalogues of our colleges—there maintaining a lingering existence and furnishing a grotesque exhibition of the survival of the unfit.

He was the youngest of four sons by his father's second wife. His brothers early manifested the fighting tastes of the race to which they belonged; but he was different. In their childish games they designed towers and castles and fortified towns, while he devoted himself entirely to the erection of churches and monasteries. This peculiarity attracted the attention of his father, who used jestingly in consequence to call the boy his bishop. In numerous other ways did his preference for an ecclesiastical life, his trust in a divine power, manifest itself in his early years. Once while still a child, when the place was threatened with attack and the men on every side were running to arms, and the non-combatants seeking for shelter, he

asked to be carried to the church, thereby implying, as he expresses it, that greater security could be found in the house of God than in a town filled with soldiers, and fortified by towers and walls. This feeling, he tells us, he kept through all his life. Yet it may be doubted if the difference between himself and his brothers, who chose the profession of arms, was not more external than real. Certainly that quiet and repose which is deemed to be so peculiar a characteristic of the religion of Christ, it was never his lot to experience. If in heart he belonged to the church, it was to the church militant. His life, so far as we know about it, was a stormy one, and it was more often stormy from choice than from necessity. The race from which he sprang, both on his father's and mother's side, was not of the kind to give to the boy feelings of long-suffering, patience, meekness, and the charity that endureth all things. He doubtless longed after a fashion for the reign of peace and good-will upon the earth; but it is doubtful if he would not have been grievously put out if it had actually come in his time: it is certain that like very many others who offer similar petitions, he did not care for its coming until all those to whom he had a special aversion had met with what he conceived to be their just deserts. It was never his fault, indeed, if his enemies did not receive their due. Throughout his whole career, the man, whether layman or ecclesiastic, who smote him on one cheek, was pretty certain to receive blows in return upon both of his own.

As the tastes of his brothers were exclusively military, it was natural that the young Giraldus, who consorted with them daily, should be influenced by their preferences. His studies in consequence began to suffer. But from the neglect of these he was recalled by the admonition of his uncle, the bishop of St. David's. The admonition was made still more effective by suggestive remarks of two of the bishop's chaplains. One of them compared for him the Latin adjective for "rough," "uncultured," *durus*, and the other the word for "stupid," *stultus*. There was a personal application about this method of instruction that did not escape the boy's attention. At any rate it effected its purpose, for it stimulated him to renewed exertions, and he at once devoted himself to his books with great zeal. He soon

surpassed, he tells us, his companions, and having exhausted all that Wales had to furnish in the shape of teaching, which could not have been much, he made three several journeys to Paris for the sake of further prosecuting his studies. There he remained several years. We have his assurances that while there he came in time to equal the best of his instructors. More than that he himself gave lessons in the studies of the Trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—and in the last-named especially distinguished himself. Though these are the words of a man whose admiration for himself never flagged, whose vanity was of a fairly colossal type, it is not unlikely to have been true. All scholars who have examined the works of Giraldus agree that he must have been a hard student, and that his acquaintance, in particular, with the Latin classics and with the Christian fathers was of the most minute and extensive nature. It is much harder to believe his further assertion that he was selected as a sort of representative good boy, that he was invariably pointed out by his teachers as the example for the others to follow. What he tells us on this point may be true; but if so, the implication as to the amiable character of the students fully bears out the stories in regard to them that have come down from somewhat unfriendly sources.

In 1172, Giraldus came back from Paris full of a zeal for religion, or at any rate for ecclesiasticism, which it is certainly the exception to find in these days in those who have made that city their place of study. The first thing that struck his eye on his return to his native country was that the dues of the church were not fully collected. Owing to the carelessness of the ecclesiastical authorities throughout the whole of the diocese of St. David's, the tithes of wool and cheese were not paid. Here was an opportunity for enthusiasm to display itself efficiently and serviceably. The bishop of St. David's was subordinate to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Giraldus accordingly sought out Richard, who had succeeded Becket in the primacy, and in addition was papal legate. To him he represented the condition of affairs. The primate sympathized fully with zeal of this sort, and the young reformer was sent as commissioner into Wales with power to correct these and similar abuses. It was not a pleasant, nor was it altogether a

safe duty that he had chosen for himself. The population was rude and wild, and the prevalent lawlessness was held in little check by any religious restraint. Indeed, the state of society then existing in Wales, as depicted by Giraldus and his contemporaries, has little about it that is romantic, little that can afford gratification to the lover of mediævalism. The nobility were constantly engaged in hostilities among themselves, when not engaged in hostilities with England; and all the native inhabitants, without distinction of rank, seem to have lived in general a life of laziness and robbery, the tedium of which was at occasional intervals judiciously relieved by murder. In their mountain fortresses neither the nominal Christianity which they had professed for nearly a thousand years, nor the nominal civilization which they had possessed since the Roman occupation, had ever made any progress worth mentioning. Under an external coating of culture and religion they were still barbarous at heart. Outward conformity there was to the rites of the church, and sometimes, indeed, devotion to what they fancied to be their faith, and still more often a superstitious dread of its penalties. But all the personal details given of that time show that Christianity had little controlling influence over the lives of the men who were supposed to be under its sway. Walter Mapes, in a little notice of what he calls the undiscerning devotion of the Welsh, gives as an illustration an account of one of this race, which was told him by William de Braose, a noted military leader in the days of the three first Angevin kings. "I had with me," said this Norman baron, "a certain Welshman of high rank, who every night rose from his bed at the first crowing of the cock, and stretching himself out on the bare ground perfectly naked, spent the time till daybreak in prayer; and in general he so conducted himself that on seeing him one would fancy him more than mortal, and indeed but little lower than the angels. Whereas in military enterprises he was not only reckless of his own life, but eager to take the life of others; his hands were swift to the shedding of blood; and so exultant was he in the perpetration of manslaughter or any other crime that one would deem him given over entirely to the devil."* Mapes

* *De Nugis Curialium*, *Distinctio*, ii, cap. viii.

remarks in reference to this, that among the Welsh, the fear of the Lord was rarely according to knowledge. Yet it may be doubted whether this disposition to condone indulgence in evil by unusual attention to ceremonial rites and observances was so much the characteristic of that race as it was of that time. Giraldus himself in a reference to* the very author of this story, William de Braose, seems to look upon such mere external devotion as a fair offset to the commission of a great deal of wrong-doing. He is speaking of the alleged practice of usurping the property of the church in which Henry II. was a chief offender. In so doing he was naturally imitated by his followers, and among these William de Braose was in this respect especially conspicuous. But Giraldus adds apologetically that no human being is perfect; that to have knowledge in all things and to offend in none belongs to God rather than man; and as in a measure to compound for his robbery of the church he mentions not only this noble's general practice of devotion, but his habit in his conversation of putting the name of his Maker first. Moreover his sentences were constantly garnished with such expressions as these: "In the name of the Lord let this be done;" "With God's will let it be done;" "If it please God," or "If God consent," or "By the grace of God it shall be so." His letters were also loaded down with such expressions to the great weariness of the scribes who wrote for him and of the men who heard them read. If in journeying he passed a church or a cross, he immediately broke off his talk, no matter with whom it was, and betook himself to prayers; and when these were finished resumed the interrupted conversation. It is, of course, possible that in all this he may have been sincere, that he was not really the sanctimonious scoundrel and hypocrite that he appears to be from this account, especially when taken in connection with some of his deeds. Certain it is that he who tells this of him not only believed in the man, but was content to take this wretched lip-service as proof of real sincerity and piety.

Among such a people Giraldus now started out to begin a work of reform. It was obviously no easy task. In their insubordination and disposition to resist, the lower classes had,

* *Itinerarium Cambriæ*, Lib. 1, Cap. 2.

moreover, the countenance of many of the nobility who were high in authority. In fact at his very first coming, in his capacity of commissioner, he was forced into a contest which marks clearly the peculiar difficulties that lay in the way of practically enforcing those rights which theoretically no one thought of denying. The sheriff of Pembrokeshire, William Karquist, looked with a good deal of disdain on the attempt of this young man to revive in its full rigor the discipline of the church. To show his contempt for the new officer, immediately upon the arrival of the latter at Pembroke, he seized eight yoke of oxen from the priory itself and shut them up in his castle. It was a wanton and unprovoked insult, which, however, in that barbarous age and amid that turbulent people and arrogant soldiery would have been borne by most men with nothing beyond ineffectual remonstrances. But remonstrances were the last thing that Giraldus ever thought of resorting to, provided there was any actually aggressive course that could be followed. He immediately assumed the offensive. Three times the commissioner demanded the return of the property. Three times his messengers were sent back empty-handed. Then Giraldus distinctly informed the sheriff that unless the cattle were restored, sentence of excommunication would be immediately pronounced upon him. It did not enter the mind of the haughty soldier that this young ecclesiastic would dare to launch the thunders of the church against the high sheriff of the county, the direct representative of the king—least of all for carrying off eight yokes of oxen, which he doubtless looked upon as one of the flimsiest of peccadilloes, if it could be termed a peccadillo at all. His knowledge of human nature was, however, to receive a speedy augmentation. On his refusal to make restitution, notice was sent him that when he heard all the bells of the monastery sounded at triple intervals he might have the certain assurance that the decree of excommunication was in the act of being carried into effect. It was no empty threat. No sooner had his messenger returned, than in presence of all the monks of the convent, and of many of the neighboring clergy who had assembled to witness the ceremony, the commissioner according to the solemn form then in use, and with lighted candles, pronounced upon the refrac-

tory noble the decree which shut him out from the hope of heaven and from the communion of the saints on earth ; and at the same time ordered all the bells to be sounded at once, both for the confirmation of the sentence and for the announcement of what had been done. To be cut off from the eternal communion of the saints, at least of the kind with whom he came into personal contact in Wales, would probably have seemed no great hardship to the overbearing soldier. But the decree of excommunication involved consequences of a temporal kind which he was not prepared to meet. On the very next day, this insolent and iniquitous thief, as Giraldus vigorously terms the high sheriff of the county, hastened to make restitution and procure pardon ; and after having received a flogging, the sentence was graciously taken off.

It is pretty certain that it was his birth more than his office that enabled Giraldus to venture safely upon these high-handed proceedings. The annals of the middle ages show conclusively that the habit of the priest was often ineffectual to save him from ill-treatment, if not even from something far worse, at the hands of a reckless and licentious nobility and soldiery. But to attack an ecclesiastic who was not only the son of a Norman baron, but was allied by blood to the men of highest rank in his native country, involved possibilities of secular retribution, which he who cared little for ecclesiastical penalties could not afford to overlook. At the same time the action of Giraldus was in accordance with a nature which was always regardless of consequences. It need hardly be said that he was successful in his mission. A man who had so little hesitation in enforcing the decrees of the church against those high in authority was not likely to meet with much resistance from the common people. It is accordingly no matter of surprise that the Welsh were "persuaded" with little difficulty to pay their tithes. Methods of persuasion like these have been so often and so effectually tried in both spiritual and secular matters that they need here nothing more than a passing allusion. One community, however, stood out against the new commissioner. These were the Flemings, who in 1105 had been planted in the territory of Ross, and who on account of their loyalty to the crown and their hostility to the

native inhabitants, enjoyed the personal favor and were largely under the personal protection of the reigning king. With these he could do nothing. For in spite of his natural hardihood, not to say audacity, Giraldus could not venture to enter into a contest with Henry II. in which he was pretty certain to gain the cross of martyrdom without its crown. So the Flemings successfully defied the commissioner. But he tells us with very evident satisfaction of the punishment that fell subsequently to their lot after the death of Henry. The Welsh had not looked with favor upon being compelled to sustain the cause of religion while their Flemish neighbors contributed nothing. So to put the support of the gospel upon a more equable basis, they organized a plundering expedition, ravaged the district of Ross, and carried away all the wool-bearing sheep. So, says our author, the Flemings had to give to an impious soldiery what they were not willing to give to the priest. He seems indeed to have no feelings of reprobation for this marauding foray. If not actually proper in itself, it was in his eyes an illustration certainly of how the wrath of man is made to praise the Lord.

But it was not alone with a fierce and godless soldiery that the commissioner came into conflict. The clergy of Wales could in many respects hardly be called ornaments to the faith. In one point in particular, their discipline was of the laxest kind. The effort to enforce celibacy in the English church had been as yet far from successful; but in Wales much less progress had been made. The new commissioner had to their full extent all the dreadful earnestness and reckless enthusiasm of youth, its devotion to the impracticable, its aspirations for the impossible. He cared little for consequences. His zeal was tempered by no considerations of prudence, by no disposition to wink at offences which would involve personal trouble or perhaps personal danger to correct. Coming to Brecknock he found the archdeacon of the district living publicly with a woman in his house. It was doubtless his wife. But no such respectable term as that is applied to her by Giraldus: concubine is the only title he has to give. This violation of the canons of the church by one so high in position could not be overlooked. He first admonished the vet-

eran offender earnestly. Admonition was of no avail. Then he commanded him on the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury to put away from him the woman, and thereafter set a better example to the flock over which he had been called to preside. Not only did the archdeacon refuse, but he was foolish and presumptuous enough, says the writer, to utter base and contemptuous words against the man who in this matter represented the primate of England and the legate of the pope. It may be remarked here in passing, that as a general rule the persons with whom Giraldus came into conflict were, according to his account, very apt to be either imbecile or impudent, and usually both. The reader of his autobiography is always impressed with the existence of the feeling on the part of the author that he has absorbed so much of virtue and sense, that very little has been left for anybody else, and none at all for his opponents. But if Giraldus was not a very lovable character, he was far from being an insipid one. Above all he had the courage of his convictions. Older men might have hesitated about taking extreme measures against one so high in position. Fairer-minded men might have doubted the policy or even the justice of attempting to enforce in a single case a canon which however accepted by the rest of the Catholic world was universally disregarded in that country in which the offender had his home. None of these considerations, however, weighed with the young soldier of the church. He promptly suspended the refractory archdeacon, and placed the archdiaconate in the hands of the primate. It is perfectly fair to assume that in this proceeding Giraldus acted entirely from convictions of duty. But it was followed by a reward which rarely falls to the lot of acts done with any such singleness of purpose. On his return from his embassy the vacant archdeaconship was conferred upon him who had vacated it.

It is a suggestive commentary upon this attempt to enforce celibacy that Giraldus expressly informs us that other revenues were assigned to the archdeacon, and unquestionably as a compensation for the loss of his place. Nothing, indeed, seems to have resulted from this proceeding that tended to change the manners of the clergy in this particular. Of this the author himself indirectly furnishes proof. More than twenty

years after this event took place, he wrote an account of Wales and the Welsh, under the title of *Descriptio Cambriæ*. In this he not only bears witness to the prevalence of marriage among the clergy, but informs us that sons obtained churches by succession after their fathers, thus by this method of inheritance possessing and polluting the sanctuary of God. He adds, moreover, that if by any chance a prelate presumed to appoint any one else than the heir to the holder of the benefice, the whole family of the claimant whose rights had not been considered would seek revenge both upon the person selected to fill the living and the one selecting him.* In another work† in which he refers to this same subject, he tells us that it was the custom for the sons of clergymen to marry the daughters of their fellow-clergymen, in order, doubtless, to make the right to the succession stronger. It looks, indeed, as if the priesthood in Wales had begun to assume almost the character of a caste. This practice of the sons succeeding, as Giraldus expresses it, to the vices and the benefices of their fathers prevailed not only in the cathedral seats, but throughout the whole of Wales. The wife designated as *focaria* ('housekeeper'), was to be found everywhere. Whatever may be thought of an ecclesiastical canon which makes immoral what is moral, the spectacle of priests living in open violation of the decrees of the church, must have had a most injurious effect upon the habits and character of the laity; and even Giraldus himself in another one of his works, half-approvingly quotes an opinion uttered by his master, Peter Manducator, in the presence of his scholars, that in no particular had the old enemy so effectually overreached the church of God as by the imposition of the vow of celibacy.‡ But whether due to the devil or not, so long as the church adopted it, there was no way for an ecclesiastic honestly to escape from it. No sadder situation for many men can well be conceived. No sadder situation, indeed, for a church, than that in which religion had made morality impossible.

In his new position as archdeacon, Giraldus took care to

* *Descriptio Cambriæ*, Liber ii., cap. v.

† *De Jure et Statu Menevensis Ecclesiæ*, Distinctio 1.

‡ *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, Distinctio ii., cap. 6.

have his authority felt. He was not one disposed to waive the slightest jot or tittle of the rights that sanctions, civil or ecclesiastical, gave him. He was speedily plunged into a sea of troubles, which he may have affected to deplore before others, but for which he must for all that have felt satisfaction in his inmost soul. Some of the incidents that took place he tells; some are worth repeating as throwing light upon practices then prevalent. One of the first abuses he had to put a stop to was the following. At the eastern extremity of the diocese of St. David's, on the very border of England, was the church of Hay. There he found that a certain knight, a brother of the incumbent of the benefice, was in the habit of dividing with the priest not merely the tithes of the church and its regular revenues, but the very gifts of the altar. To this practice he put an end, but not without difficulty and even danger. Indeed, this seems to be no solitary instance; for in his volume giving an account of Wales, he declares that there were almost as many sharers in the revenues of the church as there were leading men in the parish. The coming of an archdeacon who clearly had no intention of winking at old abuses, naturally excited the hostility of every one, lay or clerical, who was interested in the continuance of any particular perversion of trust, which had been so long practised that it had lost every savor of iniquity it may have originally had, even if it had not by process of time taken on something of the odor of sanctity. Giraldus gives an account of one of his adventures while visiting his diaconate, which is of itself sufficient to show that the ecclesiastics amid this rudest and most turbulent people of that rude and turbulent time, needed weapons more convincing than the sword of the spirit. He set out to inspect the remote district of the diocese of St. David's, between the Wye and the Severn. On the way two clergymen met him. They were messengers on the part of the dean and chapter of the border churches, and came to inform him that he must not visit these churches in his own person, but through official commissioners, especially through the dean. Such had been the practice of his predecessors, and they warned him to beware of doing what was to be done save in the manner in which it had been done. They probably could not have chosen a more effectual

way to confirm the archdeacon in his purpose of examining the condition of that part of the diocese. Nothing is more signally characteristic of the true reformer in all ages than his indisposition to comply with any advice, whether good or bad in itself, whether well or ill meant, the effect of which would have a tendency to cause things to be done peaceably. Giraldus was full to the brim of this spirit. He was by nature one of those men who, not content with simply having their own way, must have their own way in their own way. In this instance, moreover, he must have been conscious that in the real interests of the church it was his duty to resist the claim that had been put forward. His answer was short and decided. He had no intention, he told the messengers, to imitate the slackness or laziness of his predecessors, if slackness or laziness there had been. On the contrary, he purposed to perform the duties and exercise the powers of his office to their full extent. Then on behalf of all the clergy and the people and the nobility of that district the messengers solemnly prohibited his coming. At the same time they lifted up the cross, in the manner of that nation, as a warning that he should not venture farther. But the cross in the way of denunciation had been too familiar an implement in the hands of Giraldus himself to occasion him any trouble or anxiety. He kept on his journey. At the entrance of a certain great forest, he was met by still another delegation. Spiritual terrors had failed; temporal ones were now to be tried. He was informed that enmity up to the very point of death had existed between his family and certain of the nobility of that district. This hostility had long been quiet, had indeed been laid to sleep. But the report of his coming had been sufficient to rouse it into new life. Desperate men among the enemies of his family were certain to lie armed to the teeth, in ambuscade, for him in the woody region in which he was about to enter, and would certainly be satisfied with nothing short of his death. Again and again reports of this kind reached him as he moved through the forest. His whole retinue were in a state of terror. But there was one man whose courage never flinched. It was the archdeacon. This we may be said to know at first hand, for he tells us so himself. But indeed there is no need of doubting it. Courage was

characteristic of the race to which he belonged—courage so desperate as to be often senseless and sometimes to be sublime. In many incidents of his career Giraldus showed that he was not excessively troubled by timidity of any kind. On this particular occasion he acted in a lofty way, corresponding to his own lofty account of it, and pressed on as if hearing nothing, or inwardly despising what he heard. He had foreseen and foresaid, he tells us, that something of this kind would be framed or feigned—to adopt for once the alliteration which is so marked a characteristic of our author's Latin style. But he had no intention of allowing the respect and authority belonging to his position to be annihilated at the very outset by menaces. On the other hand, his opponents did not confine themselves to threats. The attack, which had been announced so many times, came at last. All the circumstances attending it present, indeed, a curious picture of the method pursued in those wilds of settling disputes in regard to the rights and privileges of the church. The archdeacon had traversed the rugged district of Elevein, lying beyond the Wye, and covered thick with forests, and had come near to Melenith, where he purposed to lodge. Here he met the foe. He had sent before him, as was the custom, a part of his retinue to prepare for the night's entertainment. Suddenly he found them driven back upon the main body by a multitude armed with lances and bows. Not only did the flying fugitives implore him to retrace his steps, but those who were with him. Indeed they upbraided him for not having followed their counsels before; they informed him with painful distinctness how much better it would have been had he taken their advice not to move forward. All these well-meant entreaties were contemptuously spurned by their leader. He put himself at the head of his retinue, and commanding them to follow, pressed on to the church. The opposing multitude seems to have given way at his approach; at least of them he says nothing. But the doors in every dwelling of the town he found closed and locked. The church, however, happened to be open. There he at once took up his quarters, directing the horses to be stabled in the cemetery; and there he speedily found himself in a state of siege. But Cadwalla, son of Madoc, the prince, who bore

sway in that district, was allied to him by blood. To him he sent information of his coming, of the repulse his attendants had met, and of the fact that he was shut up and surrounded in the church. His relative at once forwarded him plenty of food for his immediate necessities, and along with it assurances that he would come to his relief in person on the morrow, and that every injury done to the archdeacon would be treated as if it was an injury done to himself. This was all that was needed. The siege was incontinently raised, and six or seven clergymen, one after the other, sought pardon from their ecclesiastical superior. They gained it, but not without making full satisfaction for their disobedience and the indignity they had sought to put upon him.

But though Giraldus had succeeded in causing his authority to be respected in this remote district, he was far from being out of his troubles. Indeed that point he never reached. He was a type of the war-horse of scripture. He snuffed the battle afar off. The prospect of a fight not only had no terrors for him, it rather filled his soul with secret pleasure. He had devoted himself to an ecclesiastical profession and to scholastic pursuits; but nature was constantly proving too strong for education. He was born for the battle and the storm; and nowhere did he enjoy himself more than in the troublous scenes in which he was called upon to act, and which he usually contrived to create, if they did not previously exist. The next event in which he bore a part gives a clearer conception of the man than would pages of description. The incident is told by himself with a good deal of fullness, and his account of it reads much like that of a battle.

St. David's was without a bishop, for the incumbent had died in May, 1176, and no successor had as yet been appointed. Encroachments on the diocese, if any, could meet with resistance only from the archdeacons, of whom there were and still are four. It so happened at this time that one of these was fully adequate to encounter any attack that was likely to be made.

Giraldus had returned from his expedition in which he had reduced to subjection the refractory clergy, and was comfortably resting after his labors at his home in Llanddewi. He had not,

however, been there more than three or four days when messengers came to him in hot haste from the very men who had before been so determined that he should not exercise over them the right of visitation. They now besought him to come back. For the territory of the diocese was threatened. Upon the border of it and of the adjoining diocese of St. Asaph stood the church of Keri just a little south of the Severn river. From time immemorial it had been under the jurisdiction of the bishop of St. David's. Thither, however, the bishop of St. Asaph had signified his intention of going on the next Sunday for the purpose of dedicating the church. Apparently its priest was in his interest. This would be the entering wedge for the acquisition of the whole district. Nothing that the local clergy could do had been of any avail: indeed it is clear that they were divided in feeling. An archdeacon was the only one who could venture to cope successfully with one so high in authority as a bishop. The adherents of St. David's naturally turned to their own archdeacon whose acquaintance they had recently made, reluctantly it is true, but very fully. They had just had an opportunity to test his character and were perfectly satisfied with the result. Giraldus was wearied with his previous journey. But the danger to the diocese was too great to allow time for rest; for the delegates assured him that it was the ultimate intention of the bishop of St. Asaph to take possession of the whole region as far as the Wye. He resolved, in consequence, to start at once. All dissuaded him from the expedition, and especially those who had been with him on the previous one. These, indeed, absolutely refused to go. It was not the toil of the journey, Giraldus tells us, that prompted them to take this course, but fear. He, as usual, rose superior to any such considerations. On the next day after the coming of the messengers he started, taking with him those whom he had prevailed upon to go along. He forded the Wye and passing through the woody districts of Elevein, spent the night in the confines of Melenith. The following day was Saturday. Early in the morning he rose and took measures for the coming conflict. After the celebration of the mass he sent messengers around the country to the clergy ordering them to assemble and follow him. He dispatched messengers also to the nobility,

asking them to furnish him with courageous men from among their retainers, to assist him if there were need, and to defend the rights of St. David's; inasmuch as the bishop of St. Asaph was reported to be coming with an armed band. Thus having fortified himself both on the spiritual and the secular side, he moved in the night to the immediate neighborhood of Keri.

Early on the following Sunday morning the archdeacon presented himself at the church. Here he met his first difficulty. The keys of the building were not to be found. Two of the clergy connected with the church had hidden them, and had then gone off to join the bishop of St. Asaph. After diligent search, however, the missing keys were discovered and the archdeacon entered in triumph. The bells were immediately rung to signify that he had taken formal possession; and at the same time he began the celebration of the mass. In the midst of it came the priest of the church along with messengers from the bishop; these brought an order that the building should be immediately made ready for dedication. There was evidently no thought on the part of the prelate that his commands would be disregarded or that even the slightest opposition would be attempted. The archdeacon listened to the summons, but went on to complete the celebration of the mass. When this was finished he sent certain of his own clergy on whose discretion he relied, along with the rural dean to meet the bishop and to assure him, if he came in peace and as a friend and neighbor, that he should be happy to receive him with all respect and honor; but in no other way save as a friend and neighbor must he think of approaching. Great was the astonishment of the bishop at finding the archdeacon back again in this rugged district which he had just left; but he had gone too far in the undertaking to abandon it at that point. Giraldus and he had been fellow-students at Paris, and the former, whose vocabulary never lacked terms of vigorous vituperation, assures us that the latter was a very supercilious and presumptuous man, and indeed in telling the story of this controversy applies to him a number of similar adjectives which could hardly have been inspired by any tender reminiscences of their common school life. To the archdeacon's message the bishop returned the reply that he was not coming as a neighbor and a guest,

but for the purpose of dedicating the church of Keri, and thereby discharging his episcopal duty within his own diocese. There was clearly to be no compromise, and no delay in the opening of hostilities. The strategic preparations of Giraldus at once came into use. A prohibition was instantly issued by the rural dean and his attendant clergy forbidding the bishop of St. Asaph to approach with this object in view and enjoining upon him that he should not presume to dedicate a church of another diocese to which he had not been called or invited. Appeal was also made to the pope. Threats of this kind might have influence upon the laity, but Giraldus was too much in the habit of wielding ecclesiastical thunderbolts, and too well acquainted with their nature and force to expect them to have much effect upon one of his own order. He had wisely taken care to provide certain of his messengers with fast horses with orders to announce to him at the earliest moment the result of the conference. No sooner had he learned that the bishop was approaching than he proceeded to carry into effect the operations already planned. A certain number of his party were left in the church to defend it, and to keep the doors fastened, while the archdeacon himself at the head of the main body of the clergy marched out to encounter the enemy. They met at the entrance of the church yard; and the skirmishing at once began. The bishop commanded the archdeacon to depart at once and leave to his disposal the edifice and its surroundings, otherwise he should be under the necessity of excommunicating him, though in consequence of their old companionship in study at Paris, he was reluctant to resort to this extremity. The archdeacon in reply was just as affectionate in referring to the past, but likewise just as determined in regard to the future. For the sake of their ancient companionship and friendship, he begged the bishop to depart in peace, and advised him not to be putting his sickle in a portion of the spiritual harvest, which it was not his business to reap. To this the only answer vouchsafed by the bishop was the reading of the commission from the archbishop of Canterbury, confirming him bishop over the diocese of St. Asaph and excommunicating all who illegally resisted his authority. Nor was he content with this. He declared that the church of Keri, and

the other churches between the Wye and the Severn belonged to his diocese. In evidence of this he produced an old book which he claimed contained the proof of it and caused it to be read: and on the heels of this he declared that if the archdeacon did not at once desist from his opposition he would incontinently excommunicate him and all his followers. Little effect did these threats have upon his pugnacious antagonist, who replied that the church of Keri and the others between the Wye and the Severn did not belong to the diocese of St. Asaph, but for three hundred years had been a part of the see of St. David's, and that the words of the primate confirming the authority of the bishop had no reference to them, inasmuch as their action was not illegal. "You can write in your books anything you please," he added scornfully, in conclusion, "but if you have a charter giving you this right, with a genuine seal, show it; and if you do not have one, and attempt to excommunicate me for standing up in defence of my own church, I myself will in turn proceed to pronounce a similar sentence upon you." The idea of an archdeacon venturing to excommunicate his ecclesiastical superior was something that had never occurred to the mind of the bishop; and to the carnal-minded, if any such were then present, the matchless impudence of the proposition must have been an attractive feature of the whole performance, as it subsequently was to the court of Henry II. The bishop began to reason with his audacious opponent. He assured him that it was not lawful for an archdeacon to excommunicate a bishop. But Giraldus was not in the least concerned for that. Everything about the whole transaction was illegal, as he viewed it, and he had no intention that his side should suffer from any lack of illegality. "If you are a bishop," said he, "you are, at any rate, no bishop of mine. You have no more power to excommunicate me than I have to excommunicate you. Let the sentence of each have all the effect it can, since on both sides it is pronounced without authority."

The defiance had been given, and the battle was now joined. The rugged Welsh hills never saw a much queerer proceeding going on under the name of religion than that which immediately followed. The bishop, backing his horse a little way,

quickly jumped down from it, put his mitre on his head, and bearing the crosier in his hand advanced upon foot at the head of his followers in order that greater weight might be given to the sentence he was about to fulminate. But he had to deal with an antagonist who had anticipated every possible situation that might arise. At once, at the command of the archdeacon a majestic body of priests, clothed in white stoles and surplices and the other gorgeous vestments of their order, came marching from the church in solemn procession with lighted candles, and with the cross uplifted in front. The reading of that old book had allowed time for all these preparations to be made. Giraldus takes occasion to tell us that he knew the nature of his opponent; that he was not only rash and presumptuous, but also garrulous and verbose. If the bishop was rash and presumptuous, it was pretty certain that in the latter quality he had found his equal, if not his master. As he saw this procession moving toward him, he asked what it was, and for what it was coming. "For this purpose," was the lofty answer, "that if you presume to utter sentence of excommunication against us, we in turn shall pronounce sentence of excommunication upon you and your followers." The situation began to look more serious to the bishop than it had done. He judged it best to temporize, and once more made an affecting allusion to their old-time friendship and companionship in study. Touching reminiscences of this kind, however, are of the class of agencies that are always expected to work great wonders, but never do. "On account of the friendship there was once between us," said the bishop, "and of our fellowship in studies, I will spare your person and the persons of those with you; nor by name will I pronounce sentence upon any one. Only in general terms will I excommunicate those who venture to encroach upon the rights of St. Asaph, and to convert to their own use what belongs to it." But the archdeacon had little disposition to be spared, and no disposition at all to allow any such modified course to be taken. He knew that the glittering generalities of the sentence of excommunication would be applied by the rude people of the country with a particularity that would be inconvenient and unpleasant. It was not within the see of St. David's that a foreign bishop was to

assume a right to utter decrees against anybody. He pointed to the mountains of the diocese of St. Asaph, not far distant. "If upon those hills," said he, "you were to keep uttering from morning till night a general sentence of excommunication we should not care about it in the least, for in no wise would it concern us. But there is present here a multitude of people. They would not understand it, but would suppose that your sentence, if pronounced here under any form whatever, was pronounced against us. We are unwilling accordingly to have any sentence of any kind given here." There was no escape from this position for the bishop. Either he must be entirely successful or ignominious failure awaited him. No other way seemed open except to press on. So in a loud tone of voice he proceeded to deliver sentence of excommunication upon the enemies of St. Asaph. No sooner had he begun, however, than the archdeacon in a louder voice, and assisted by his followers in the church-yard, set to work to excommunicate all who presumed to rob St. David's of its possessions, or disturb it in its rights. For some time the hurling of these spiritual thunderbolts went on before the assembled multitude. The result might well seem doubtful. If on the one side was the higher ecclesiastical authority, on the other was actual possession of the church. The latter fact gave the archdeacon an opportunity he did not fail to improve. Casting his eyes upward he observed the bells. He knew well the effect that the sound of them had upon the rude population of his native country, when it was known that they were rung against themselves. He commanded them at once to be tolled simultaneously at triple intervals, both for the confusion of his adversaries and the confirmation of his own sentence. The effect was instantaneous. The bishop and his followers could stand the voice of man, but not of metal. Immediately mounting their horses, they hurried away, Giraldus tells us, a good deal faster than they came, leaving their sentence of excommunication broken off in the middle. The religious enthusiasm of the multitude that had come together to witness this novel Sunday service was at once inflamed to the highest pitch in defence of the rights of St. David's. They raised a great cry and followed fast upon the track of the bishop and his train, and gave still further

stimulus to the movements of these by hurling after them stones and pieces of earth and wood. These pressing evidences of the popular feeling were hardly needed, for the discomfited ecclesiastic was already making all the haste he could. He hurried to Melenith to seek Cadwalla, the prince previously mentioned, whose consent to this undertaking he had received before venturing upon it. His troubles were not all over, however, after he left the populace behind. It presents a striking picture of the times, that on his way he met a large body of clergymen mounted upon excellent horses, and armed with bows and lances, who were coming to assist in the maintenance of the rights of St. David's. They demanded what had been done at Keri. The bishop, who was far from feeling safe, replied that he had been unwilling to take any measures against the archdeacon, who had been his good friend and companion of old; and that he was going in peace to Cadwalla, in order to discuss the matter with him.

The archdeacon was now left master of the field. His first care was to berate the clergy who had gone over to the enemy, and exact from them an oath of fidelity to the diocese of St. David's and its future head. But upon hearing the news that the bishop had gone to seek Cadwalla, he hastened at once to follow in his footsteps. It was as essential that the princes of the land should be made to profess their allegiance as the clergy. In this he was likewise successful. On arriving he took up his quarters in the church near the place where Cadwalla had received the bishop. Recognizing himself as the victor, he naturally felt amiably disposed toward the human race in general, but especially so toward the particular man whom he had just worsted. He informs us with great gravity and with a kind of swelling consciousness of a lofty elevation of soul on his part, that he sent the bishop choice dishes from his own provisions and some of his very choicest liquor; and not content with the gift, he accompanied it with language equally choice. Of the latter he gives the purport. Now that he found his old fellow-student within his jurisdiction and in a pacific frame of mind, he was anxious to show him all respect and reverence. He added that if it were his fortune to receive the bishop in his private home, he would certainly entertain him

most hospitably and honorably. He begged also that the ancient friendship they had felt for each other when in private life might continue now that they were in positions of authority. This bland missive probably did not deceive at all the worthy bishop: it enraged his followers, who were opposed to the acceptance of the gifts. But it is always the non-combatants that keep on fighting after the real battle is ended. If the bishop felt wrath, he was too wise to show it. He assured the archdeacon that he should never think any the less highly of him for what had happened; that he was deserving of praise for standing up for what he deemed the rights of his church; and that for his part he would not for this occurrence give up their old friendship.

So ended the battle of Keri. But the exposed situation of the diocese of St. David's, left without a bishop, weighed heavily upon the mind of the archdeacon. It is not improbable that his own aspirations for the vacant position may have contributed to the earnestness of his defence. At any rate he hastened, as soon as matters were composed, to Henry II., who was then in the neighborhood of Northampton. The news of the adventure had traveled there before him. But unaware of this, he told the story to the king; adding a general comment upon the state of society in Wales which proved vastly entertaining to the whole court. "They are all therein alike," said he; "as the laymen of Wales are robbers of other people's property, so their clergy are robbers of churches." The story amused the monarch; but it is not improbable that it may have had an influence upon his later decision that the hero of it should not be made a bishop, at least the bishop of St. David's. At any rate, at this point begins a series of events which were destined to have a controlling influence upon the later life of Giraldus. To understand them, however, it will be necessary to go back a little.

(To be continued in the January Number.)

A SCHOLAR OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

BY PROF. THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.

SECOND PAPER. (Continued from the November Number, 1878.)

OF the four bishoprics into which Wales was and still is divided, that of St. David's was much the most important. This was not alone due to its size. It had originally been metropolitan in its character, and while the country was independent, its archbishop exercised jurisdiction over the three subordinate sees. But the political subjection of Wales involved also the ecclesiastical. First went the title of archbishop, though the power survived. But in the reign of Henry I. the latter also disappeared, and the see of St. David's was made part of the province of Canterbury. This fact was gall and wormwood to a people impatient of anything that bore the mark of subjugation to a foreign yoke. Many were the efforts made to regain their ancient rights, to restore to the oldest bishopric of Wales its metropolitan character. In a gallant but fruitless struggle to attain this end, no small share of the stormy life of Giraldus was passed.

The first opportunity he had of displaying his interest in this question was in the general ecclesiastical council which was held at Westminster in the year 1175. Thither all the prominent ecclesiastics of the diocese of St. David's repaired, with the hope of finding redress for their long-standing grievance. In this movement, their head, the bishop, could not take any direct part; for at his consecration he had abjured for himself the revival of any such controversy. But this did not affect the action of his subordinates. They first sounded the mind of the king, and sought to secure his favor by arguments that in that age were among the most potent at the courts of princes. Giraldus tells us without any hesitation that no small amount of money was given both to the sovereign and to his counsellors to bring about the desired result. The monarch, however, was more inclined to look with favor upon the money than upon the cause it was given to support. He delayed for a long time returning any answer, and when it

came it was not very acceptable. He refused to entertain the proposition, though it did not occur to him to restore the money which had failed to influence him. All in consequence that the representatives of the diocese could do was to assert in presence of the papal legate the ancient metropolitan rights and dignity of the see of St. David's.

The following year witnessed events of a more stirring character. In May, 1176, the bishop of St. David's died. No nomination or election to fill such a vacancy could be made until the king had been formally notified of the death of the incumbent, and had given his assent to the choice of a successor. But the canons of the diocese, upon whom devolved the nomination, were in a hurry. They immediately assembled and after long discussion unanimously agreed to present the names of their four archdeacons as candidates for the vacant dignity; but every one assumed that Giraldus would be the one selected. At least he tells us so. So confident were they in the success of their scheme and the wisdom of their course, that on the impulse of the moment they broke forth into a hymn of praise. The populace on the outside, hearing that a bishop had been elected, and that Giraldus was the man, united in confirming the choice with loud acclamations. But a night's rest brought back reflection, at least to the one most interested. The next morning Giraldus, entering the church, renounced the nomination of himself, though he declared he should not be wanting in the effort to uphold the free and legitimate election of his own church. Nor did he delay taking measures to remedy the blunder which had been made. He hurried to the king of England. But the news of the transaction had already reached the monarch. He was exceedingly indignant, and immediately ordered all the canons who had taken part in the proceeding to be deprived of their lands and revenues. But it was against Giraldus that his wrath was mainly directed; and Giraldus does not neglect to tell us the reason why. The king was afraid of him. Not by any one, save by him, could the recovery of the rights of St. David's be accomplished; and the ruler of England dreaded to see in a position of power one like the archdeacon of Brecknock, distinguished for his high spirit and allied by blood to the lead-

ing nobility of his native land. Giraldus indeed, had always this one perennial source of comfort, that everybody, kings, prelates, and nobles stood constantly in terror of him and of his surpassing abilities; and the loss of any position to which he aspired was invariably sweetened by the consciousness in his own mind that he was too great and gifted a man to make it safe for others to let him fill it. No one has ever lived who has managed to extract more enjoyment out of his vanity. It gave an added pleasure to prosperity; it was a never-failing solace to adversity. He tells us that on this occasion the archbishop of Canterbury strongly advised the selection of himself for the vacant bishopric. But the king was not to be moved. It was neither to the advantage of the crown of England nor to the see of Canterbury, the monarch asserted, that a man too able and too active should be placed at the head of the oldest diocese of Wales.

Leaving out of view the self-conceit of the man, which is something almost too stupendous for human conception, there may have been a good deal of truth in his statement of the aversion on the part of so keen-sighted a monarch as Henry II., to have as bishop of St. David's any one possessing the peculiar characteristics of Giraldus. Earlier in his reign the king had made one great mistake. His controversy with Becket, and the infinite annoyance and humiliation it had brought him, were not likely to be ever long absent from his mind. He doubtless saw in the uneasy vanity of the archdeacon of Brecknock a disposition under proper encouragement to become a martyr, and he had no inclination to contribute another name to the list of saints who had died in defence of the rights of the church. At any rate, whatever may have been the motives really influencing the monarch, there was from the outset no chance for the election of Giraldus. The canons, upon whom the choice devolved, saw this plainly; at least they were subjected to a course of discipline which enabled them to see it. They were dragged from place to place in the train of the monarch, they were alternately cajoled and threatened. A well-considered method of treatment, made up in about equal proportions of bullying and bribing, at length accomplished the end Henry II. had in view. Worn

out with travel, eager to recover the revenues of which they had been deprived, fearful of being on ill terms with their sovereign, they at last were in a fit frame of mind to carry out the king's wishes, and select any one he might choose. Giraldus alone stood out; but all his efforts were of no avail, not to secure the position for himself, but for some one connected with the diocese, or at least known to the men over whom he was to be ruler, and acquainted with the language of the flock of which he was to be the shepherd. But all his associates, his brother archdeacons, even the papal legate failed him. With voices shaken with fear, the canons, who were supposed to exercise freedom of choice, named for the vacant dignity Peter de Laia, the prior of Wenloc, a monk of the order of Cluny, with whose person or name none of them had been previously acquainted. It was enough for them that he was the candidate of the king. But though defeated, Giraldus tells us that he did not cease to labor earnestly for the honor of his diocese; and the method he took was supremely characteristic. With that matchless impudence of his, which derives a charm from its apparently being wholly unconscious, he wrote to the bishop-elect, whose face he had never seen and whose choice he had bitterly resisted. In this letter he warned him that he should not presume to do anything against the dignity of the see to which he had been assigned rather than called; especially should he not abjure the metropolitan claim of St. David's. But the newly-elected prelate, the mere creature of the king, paid no heed to his exhortation. He took the oath to acknowledge the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury, and in consequence received the consecration. As a member of the secular clergy Giraldus had a professional dislike of the monastic orders; but it was probably this elevation of one of them to the position he coveted that turned his dislike into hatred.

The deed, however, was done. Not in a church, but in a chamber; not in a cathedral city, but in a fortified town; not near the chancel, but before the throne, a trembling band of clergymen had elected as their head one whom then they did not even know by sight, and had not known before by name. The bishopric of St. David's had fallen into the hands of a contemptible monk, who cared nothing for its interests and

would make no effort to restore it to its ancient dignity. The metropolitan see of the Welsh church would now be under the sway of a supple tool of the English court, who was a stranger to the people he had come to rule and ignorant of the language they spoke. No result could well have happened more distasteful to Giraldus. He determined to leave a country where all had proved cowardly if not false, where nothing but disappointment rewarded the most earnest labors for the restoration of the primitive honors of the church and the primitive purity of its discipline. To that city he turned his eyes wherein so many of his school days had been passed. Paris had then as now that marvelous attraction so hard to define, to persons of every taste, whether of the highest or lowest kind. But in particular its university was then celebrated for the very things that Giraldus desired to study. It was at Bologna that the civil law was most efficiently taught; Salerno was famous for her school of medicine; but to Paris superiority in theology and the seven arts was generally accorded. Thither therefore the disappointed archdeacon prepared to bend his steps. He gathered together his books, and to use his own words, with a mind directed always to the highest aims, passed over to France. His object was to still further pursue his studies, or as he more elegantly states it, he set out to build upon the foundation of literature and the arts the walls of the civil and canon law, and to crown the completed structure with the sacred roof of scriptural theology; that thus the edifice of his learning, firmly fastened by a triple construction, might stand unshaken. It is in some such way as this that he expresses it in that ornate Latin diction of his, after which our panting English toils in vain. Every age has its so-called liberal education, the possession of which justifies any one in looking upon every one who has not gone through the prescribed training, as having somehow not quite come up to the mark. At this time the correct thing was to go through with the seven liberal arts, as they were called, constituting the Trivium and Quadrivium—the former including grammar, logic, and rhetoric, the latter arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. It is to be remarked that the same educational commonplaces, which the profane term *cant*, were in fashion then as at present. The

Trivium, we are informed by a writer contemporary with Giraldus, gives the man power (*potestas*), whereas the studies of the Quadrivium impart discipline (*disciplina*). We seem, indeed, in reading these old middle-age authors, to find ourselves in the same familiar region, where counsel is darkened by words, where phrases are made to do duty for ideas, and where we examine with much dimness of vision and discuss with much bitterness of speech the nature and desirability of sweetness and light.

To erect the above-mentioned gorgeous superstructure—to continue the architectural simile of Giraldus—according to the light of that age, Paris was, as has already been remarked, the best place. It is almost needless to say, that, according to our author's own assertions, he made the most astonishing proficiency. He devotes several pages to giving an account of the success which attended his lectures. Whenever he was to speak, so great was the throng that the largest house could scarcely hold the crowd that came. Matter and manner were so richly joined in his discourse, that all hung with rapt attention upon his sayings. Scholars strove to write down his words precisely as they fell from his lips. He gives us the subject of his first public discussion. It was on the question, whether a judge ought to decide according to what is alleged, or according to his conscience. His treatment of it, however, he does not set forth, so that we are unable to form any opinion as to the intellectual elevation of the men who, according to his own account, were so carried away by his performance.

After a long stay in Paris—though precisely how long, our author, with his usual indifference to dates, neglects to tell us—Giraldus set out to return to his native country. On his way back he stopped at Canterbury. There, at the invitation of the prior of the monastery, he dined with the monks in their refectory, and whatever may have been his appetite, he did not fail to fulfill that portion of the duty of a guest, which consists in criticising the manners and meals of his host. Giraldus, as we have said, as a member of the secular clergy, felt a professional dislike to the monastic order; and this professional dislike had, in his case, been aggravated into a personal one, by the selection of a member of the order to fill the most important bishop-

ric of his native land. What he saw at the dinner he necessarily saw with jaundiced eyes ; but not on that account is what he says any the less interesting.

There is, at the present time, a very general impression that intemperance is, with us, very largely on the increase ; that as compared with our forefathers, we bestow much more attention upon the gratification of our appetites than they ; and that, in consequence of this steadily increasing indulgence, the race is exhibiting everywhere marks of deterioration, or, at least, is in special danger of becoming deteriorated. It is safe to assert that he who so believes is not very familiar with the life of the past. Bad enough we doubtless are ; but, as compared with the generality of our ancestors, we are more than temperate, we are abstemious. In proof of this statement it is not necessary to go back to those earliest times, in which heathenism prevailed. A race, whose conception of the future life was that of a monotonous eternity of gorging and guzzling, diversified at regular intervals by fighting and murder, was not likely to be distinguished for self-restraint while existing upon earth. But the same disposition to intemperance in eating and drinking prevailed almost as powerfully after the conversion of the English to Christianity. The annals of the middle ages, whenever they touch upon social or domestic habits at all, are full of references to excesses, in which he alone failed to share who had not opportunity. Wasteful extravagance and abject poverty flourished side by side. But though feasting on an enormous scale abounded at times in the courts of kings and nobles, it was not in the castle or the palace that cooking attained to the dignity of a science. In them certainly great culinary triumphs were occasionally achieved ; but it is elsewhere that we must look for steady progress toward an ideal perfection in the preparation of food. Much praise has been given, and most deservedly given, to the monastic system for its preservation of the masterpieces of antiquity. Had it not been for the scriptorium, with its band of copyists, its antiquarii and librarii, little of the literature of the past, which the present cherishes, would have come down to modern times. There is, indeed, scarcely any doubt that the bitter dislike felt by Giraldus for the monks, is the main reason why so many of

his works exist in only a single manuscript, and that often in a mutilated condition, as is the case with this particular autobiography. It was hardly a congenial task for the copyists to perpetuate writings which were largely filled with denunciations of the order to which they belonged. But though full justice has been done the monks for what they did for literature, due credit has never been given them for what they did for cooking. All remarks upon this matter invariably take the shape of praise for their generous hospitality and bountiful alms-giving, or, on the other hand, of fierce denunciation for their sensual self-indulgence. Naturally, the truth lies between the two extremes; for it would be equally incorrect to judge them, as a class, by the rigorous asceticism sometimes practiced, or the riotous excess into which they sometimes fell.

These two extremes, indeed, are always to be considered in judging of the monastic system. There is certainly nothing more striking in the religious life of the middle ages, than the steady uprising of new spiritual forces, when the old ones no longer continued to satisfy the demands of the higher nature. No sooner did one institution manifestly decline from the lofty ideal with which it set out, no sooner did formalism take the place among its members of genuine feeling, than another institution arose to fill the post left vacant, and do the work either done perfunctorily or not done at all. The human mind, once made conscious of a higher destiny, never after loses sight of it wholly. No sensuality, however degrading, no skepticism, however chilling, spread far and wide as they may be, can for a long period keep down the aspiration of the heart for a nobler creed and a purer life. The earliest monastic system sprang up to supply spiritual wants, which men felt keenly, though in the intellectual darkness in which they lay, they may have used mistaken means to satisfy the cravings of the soul. That the elevated aim which characterized its beginnings too often degenerated into the gratification of purely physical wants, and sometimes of purely physical pleasures, is true enough; but the original motive that led to its creation was pure and high, whatever may be said of the wisdom of the agency employed to carry it into effect. And when the fiery zeal that had set one religious organization in motion, flagged or failed altogether, another

speedily came forward to assume the duty that had been left undone. The light may at times have become dim, but it never went out altogether. Human imperfection was the cause that the monastic system failed for any length of time to realize anywhere the ideal which its founders had contemplated. But though, in some instances, it fell away entirely from its original type, and wrought little but what was evil, none the less can we refuse to admit the great good it has accomplished.

But it is not with the spiritual side of monastic life that we have to do here; it is almost wholly with the purely physical. It was the monk alone who fully appreciated the fact, that whether men lived or died, whether the world were saved or lost, the business of eating and drinking must continue to go on; and so long as the work of preparing for it had to be done, he saw no reason why it should not be done well. To the monks, more than to any other class, we owe the preservation and development of the culinary art. For this they were fortunately situated. They had large landed estates to fall back upon for supplies; and with the means of securing the best food, they had in the monastery all the appliances for preparing it in the best manner. But more important even than this, they had plenty of leisure to devote to the matter; in fact, they were almost forced by the circumstances of their situation to give it extraordinary attention. In a life of enforced monotonous idleness—and this is what practically the monastic life came very largely to be—when there is nothing to interest or to occupy the mind, the question of eating and drinking is certain to assume an unnatural prominence. This is conspicuously seen in camps amid the lull of active military operations; in times of peace few who have frequented places where large companies of men and women meet together, with little or nothing to afford diversion or occupation, can have failed to notice how speedily the dinner comes to be the main event of the day. Influences such as these were not occasionally, but to all intents and purposes, were always in operation in the monastery. Attention to eating and drinking was the inevitable result of the manner of life then prevalent, so soon as the special religious impulse, which first called the whole system or the individual monastery into being, had

spent its force. And in addition, the monk was specially enabled, in the matter of preparing food, not merely to preserve the fine traditions of the past, but to improve upon them : for the daily routine was not only never entirely destroyed, it was rarely even subject to interruption. In castles and courts the excitement of other pursuits, and especially of political intrigues, constantly interfered with the regular course of living ; military operations, from the very nature of things, broke it up absolutely. From all these disturbances the monastery was comparatively exempt ; and the same freedom from disquietude which enabled it to save for modern ages so much of the literature of the past that had escaped the wreck of the ancient civilization, enabled it also to preserve and perpetuate cooking as a fine art.

But it was hardly to be expected that our author would look upon the feast to which he was invited in this philosophical spirit. He saw in the excess indulged in only a scandal to the church ; and even had he believed that any good results whatever could flow from the luxury and prodigality exhibited before his eyes, he would have been the last to consent that the religion he professed should receive even temporary reproach for this cause, in order that the way might be kept smooth for future times to enter into a culinary paradise. It is possible, also, that in the matter of profusion and excess Canterbury may have been especially noted, even in that time. It is the abbot of that particular monastery, who in the old English ballad excites the envy of King John by the magnificence of his house-keeping and the number of his attendants ; and Giraldus on this occasion may perhaps have seen the worst specimen of monastic life, though he himself clearly did not think so ; for though this particular meal served often in his writings to point a moral, he does not seem to regard it as exceptional.

Certainly, the dinner of which he partook on this occasion made far more of an impression upon his mind than upon his body. Two things in particular drew the attention of our scholar, as seated with the prior and one or two other dignitaries, he watched the monks at their meal. One was their behavior, as the dishes passed from the higher to the lower

tables. The pointing of fingers, the waving of hands, the gesticulations of various kinds, the whistling instead of calling by word, all these signals made the worthy archdeacon fancy himself in the midst of a troop of stage-players or professional jesters, rather than in a grave and worshipful company of the saints. It is evident that he did not see, or was unwilling to admit, that this behavior was a necessary result of the rule which made silence one of the principal duties of a monk—a silence which was not only demanded during the performance of divine service, but during the time devoted to eating. I might have been very safely predicted that in process of time the spirit of the regulation would be broken while the letter remained intact. Such, certainly, turned out to be the case as soon as the discipline became less strict. A sign-language of a fairly complete kind was developed and handed down from generation to generation in the monasteries. Ducange, under the word *signum*, gives a curious list of more than one hundred of these methods of asking by movement of the arms or hands, or lips, for various articles; and of these, full thirty are devoted to calling for various kinds of food.

But this was far from being the worst. It was not the gesticulations and whistlings, unbecoming and even disgraceful as they were, that most scandalized the archdeacon; it was the general sumptuousness of the repast, and especially the number of dishes. When he comes to mention these, his feelings are altogether too profoundly stirred to find relief in words of denunciation. It must be owned there was some reason for such a result. Sixteen elaborate courses followed one another in regular order, and as Giraldus adds, against all order. Flesh of land animals there does not seem to have been; at any rate, it is not mentioned, and it was usually prohibited in the monastery because the beasts that live upon the earth were supposed to share in the curse that fell upon the earth itself as the punishment for the disobedience of the first pair. But of fish of every kind, cooked in every way, there was more than enough. The sea appears to have been ransacked to furnish forth the tables of the men who had consecrated themselves to lives of labor, contemplation, and prayer, who had solemnly vowed to abstain from all pleasures of the sense, and to mortify

the flesh till it became dead to the delights of the world. And not only were all sorts of food, prepared by the skill of the cooks, set before them, but all sorts of relishes and condiments that would add zest to the taste or stimulate the jaded appetite. At the very end of these courses of fishes, roasted, and boiled, and stuffed, and fried, vegetables were also distributed generally to the tables; but our author remarks that they were little tasted. This, however will not seem so surprising to the modern reader, when he reflects on the number of courses by which they had been preceded. The liquid food was likewise supplied in just proportion to the solid, and in variety enough to suit every taste. There was mead, the great, original, universal drink of the Aryan race. Among the several kinds of wine, Giraldus especially mentions *pigmentum*, *claretum*, *mustum*, and *moretum*, some of which were made from the juice of the grape mixed with honey and spices, and prepared in accordance with certain peculiar processes. But there seems to have been everything in the liquid form, from the beverage that simply gladdens the heart, to the potent drink that bewilders the brain. Cider (*sicera*) is included in the list, but cider at that time embraced almost everything of an intoxicating nature that was not wine or malt liquor. Beer was likewise to be had; but in spite of the fact that the best beer then made was brewed in England, and particularly in Kent, the very county in which the dinner was taking place, the monks were unpatriotic enough to prefer the wine, so that the home-made drink stood in the same relation to the imported, that the vegetables did to the skillfully prepared dishes of the regular courses, and was evidently held in about the same estimation. Indeed, the dinner abounded in so much that was superfluous, as well as sumptuous, that the partaker lost his relish for what was set before him, and even the looker-on suffered weariness. So, at least, Giraldus assures us, for whom language is clearly not sufficiently abusive to do justice to the subject. For once vituperation fails him. He is forced to content himself with simple exclamation. What, he asks almost pathetically, would Paul, the eremite, have said to this? Or Antony? Or Benedict himself, the father and founder of the monastic system?

Along with his account of the dinner, Giraldus tells us the

story of the interview which took place between the monks of St. Swithin's, Winchester, and Henry II. The latter was staying at Guildford, in Surrey. One day he had just returned from hunting, when the prior of St. Swithin's, and thirteen of its monks, presented themselves before him, evidently in great distress. They threw themselves on the ground at his feet, and as it was very muddy, the extremity of their sufferings was, by this proceeding, rendered still more conspicuous. With voices full of sorrow they laid before the king their complaints of the great wrong that had just been done them. It was this. Their bishop, who stood in respect to them in the place of abbot, had taken away from their meals three courses, and the full number was necessary to their support in carrying on the offices of religion. The king asked them how many courses still remained to them. "Only ten," was the mournful answer, "while from the time of St. Swithin himself, we have been wont to have, on festival days, thirteen." The monarch was somewhat astounded. He turned to the lords in his retinue. "Do you see these monks?" said he; "I thought their abbey must have been totally destroyed by fire, or some other heavy calamity have fallen upon them, when I found them rolling in the mud; whereas their only complaint is that three courses have been taken away out of the thirteen which they have been accustomed to have." Turning around and addressing the monks, he said, "I, in my own court, am content with three courses." Here he swore an oath, which it is not necessary to translate, and added, "May your bishop perish if he do not reduce the number of your courses to that of mine." The story is certainly good enough to be true. But it is much easier to believe of the monks that they were gluttons than that they were fools; and the story, as told here, would prove them far more of the latter even than of the former. But whether the tale be true or not, its existence is proof of the opinion held of them by their enemies, and of the reputation for good living they had generally acquired. They might justly complain, indeed, of the punishment to which they were subjected, if their table was made to resemble the king's; for if contemporary accounts are to be trusted, the food furnished to the attendants at the court was far from palatable.

Peter of Blois, who for a long period acted as chaplain to Henry II., draws a vivid picture of the culinary discomforts to which he was subjected. "I wonder," he says, "how any man of education can endure the vexations of a court. In their meals, their rides, their attendance, no order, no method, no moderation, is observed. Bread not kneaded or properly fermented, and made with the dregs of beer, is set before a court chaplain or a knight. The bread is as heavy as lead, mixed with cockle, half baked; the wine acid or mothery, muddy, greasy, rancid, pitchy, and vapid. I have sometimes seen wine set upon the tables of the great so full of sediment that it could not be drunk except with closed eyes, and it was necessary to grind it rather than drink it. The beer in the court is horrible to the taste and abominable to the sight. In consequence of the crowds at court, the meat sold here is scarcely sound, the fish four days old, but none the less dear on that account."*

Giraldus never forgot this dinner, and his autobiography is not the only place in which he tells of it. But as it, like everything else, came to an end, he proceeded on his journey back to Wales. When he arrived there, he found a bitter state of feeling existing between Peter de Laia, the new bishop, and his subordinates. It came at last to an open rupture, which ended for the time being in the prelate being driven from the country. Giraldus insinuates that the expulsion was a pretence rather than a reality. It was certainly far preferable for a man who loved his comfort to spend the revenues of his diocese in a more congenial society than could be found amid the turbulent clergy and laity of Wales; and many of the prelates who have been appointed over the dioceses of that country have in this respect followed in the footsteps of Peter de Laia, and this too within a comparatively recent period. Many will recollect the picture drawn of Dr. Watson, who at the beginning of this century was bishop of Llandaff, but resided in the midst of the lake country of England. In his case neglect of every duty and lack of every requirement had been almost formulated into system. He was a prominent theologian in

* Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to British History*, vol. ii, p. xxxviii.

the church of his native land; yet not content with privately disbelieving the creed he publicly professed, he may almost be said to have denounced it, and was so utterly out of sympathy with the spirit which even common decency requires it to be approached, that he explained the miracles of the New Testament as tricks of chemistry or slight-of-hand. He was a member of the House of Lords, and he never attended its deliberations. He was professor of divinity in Cambridge University, yet he delivered no lectures, and indeed performed no public exercises of any kind. He was a bishop of the church of England, yet he lived three hundred miles from his diocese, and would not have recognized many parts of it if by chance he had come upon them—an accident which never took place.

At the same time, in spite of the insinuations of Giraldus to the contrary, Peter de Laia may have been led to choose a residence outside of his diocese, by a regard for his personal safety rather than for his personal comfort. An incident that took place in 1197 brings into very clear light the difficulties of the position in which the bishop of St. David's was placed, and shows that a reluctance to reside in the territory of which he was the spiritual head, was no mere freak of fancy, or suggestion of unworthy fear. At that time the troubles between himself and his people seem to have been settled; and as Rhys, the ruler of South Wales, was threatening rebellion, he went to him and besought him not to disturb the peace of the church and the country by going to war with England. The bishop not only failed of success in his mission, his advice was rejected with insult. Nor was this all. On the night following, a number of the followers of the Welsh prince seized upon the prelate while he was sleeping, forced him from his bed, and dragged him, while dressed only in his under-garments, through the wood near his residence; and from the indignity of his situation he was not relieved till rescued by William de Braose.* When the leading prince of a country could venture to bestow attentions of such a kind upon its leading prelate, a man in this case advanced in years, safety and security from bodily injury could not well be assumed for the latter, while his relations with the clergy as well as the laity were on a hostile footing.

* *Annales de Wintonia*, A. D. 1197, in *Annales Monastici*, vol. ii.

The bishop, by the advice of the primate, appointed Giraldus to act for him during his absence from his see; and the latter, with his usual frankness, informs us that he governed for a long time the church of St. David's, with wisdom and moderation. Nor, though the statement rests on his word alone, is it unlikely to have been true. He possessed all the influence that is derived from high birth and powerful connections. To this was added great learning, which is something that is always far more apt to impress contemporaries than the very highest wisdom; and along with his learning, and in spite of his vanity, there was in his nature a certain elevation of soul which freed him from sordid views, or from any willingness to tolerate abuses of any kind for the sake of his own comfort. Executive ability he was, moreover, likely to have inherited. There is really not much reason to doubt that his management was a benefit both to the bishop and the diocese; and to both it is equally probable that it must at times have been offensive; for his nature was such that no duty was more cheerfully done than that which gave him an opportunity to make himself disagreeable. To the bishop, indeed, he must have seemed both unendurable and indispensable. This double distinction of being both a nuisance and necessity, Giraldus has not been the first to attain; but from the very nature of things it was not a position he could long hold. If the account that he gives of his bishop's acts and character be true, a good understanding could not by any possibility exist between men of views and feelings so opposite. Open war broke out at last between them, and Giraldus threw up his commission as legate, so as thereby to put himself at perfect liberty to attack his superior. The contest went on for a long time; and though he does not say so, it is not hard to believe that while it lasted Giraldus enjoyed his life. Ardently as he had longed to preside over the see of St. David's, it is doubtful if he were not far happier while he was annoying the bishop than he would have been if occupying the bishop's place. And he had the blessed consciousness throughout the whole of the controversy, that he was absolutely and unqualifiedly right, while his opponent was absolutely and unqualifiedly wrong. No doubt ever shook the confidence of his soul that he was acting in obedience to the

loftiest calls of duty. Nor had he any hesitation in expressing his feelings freely. One of his letters, addressed to the bishop, with the nominal intent of defending himself from attack, manages, under an air of outward respect, to convey an insult in almost every line. He discourses quite fully on the incompetence of members of the monastic orders to hold high positions in the church. He thinks it wonderful that an indiscreet monk, ignorant of both divine and human law, should with confidence and rashness presume impudently and imprudently to perform the duties of the clergy. In support of his views he makes an incursion into the realm of etymology, and brings back as spoil a derivation of the Græco-Latin word for 'monk,' which is certainly a striking one for a man whom a prominent English historian has lately styled "the father of modern philology." *Monachus*, he says, comes from *monos*, which means "solitary," and *acos*, which means "sorrowful." The legitimate inference is not left to the imagination, but directly applied. Let the monk give up his offices in the church, let him stay in his solitary cell and sorrow for his sins. But freely as Giraldus talked to his bishop, he was far more free in talking of him. His language, when it came to abuse, could never under any circumstances be accused of lacking definiteness and precision; and these qualities are particularly conspicuous in the terms he applies to his superior. Still it is curious to observe, how with him the ecclesiastical feeling is apt to prevail over the purely moral. He brings many charges against the prelate; but alienation of the church property seems to be regarded as the most grievous crime; absenteeism, oppression of the inferior clergy, even incontinence are, to all appearance, treated as of comparatively inferior importance. Nor did he confine himself to words in this controversy, or refrain from acts. That indeed would have been impossible for him; for by nature, he was as vigorous as he was verbose. Among other things, he even accused the bishop to the pope, and sought to secure his deposition. Nor in spite of the difference of position were the two parties unequally matched. At length peace was made between them; but, according to Giraldus, it was not until at a synod held at St. David's, the bishop restored the property of which the church had been unjustly despoiled.

How much truth there is in the particular charges made against Peter de Laia by his subordinate, it is of course impossible to say ; but there is no reason to doubt the account given by the latter of the practices of episcopal extortion which were then prevalent. Of this he tells, in another work, some stories, which, looked at from one point of view are amusing ; from another point they are apt to arouse a different feeling. Most of these stories relate to the exaction of domestic animals, especially hogs, a matter of no slight importance amid the swine-fed population of Wales. One of them is the following : A bishop noticed that a priest under his jurisdiction was the owner of a number of fat hogs. He summoned him to his presence, and informed him that Christmas was near at hand. "Before that day," he added, "let me have ten of your hogs." "My lord," was the reply of the priest, "I have but few hogs, and those are very necessary to me and to my family." "For that reason," was the reply of the bishop, "you shall now give me twenty." The priest fancied this to be a joke, and was at first rather flattered at the condescension of his spiritual ruler. "I am pleased," said he, "that my hogs furnish matter for laughter and jest to my lord." On this point he was speedily undeceived. "Before you leave me," replied the bishop, "you will find that this is a serious matter, and anything but a joke ; now you shall make me a gift of thirty." Here the priest became thoroughly alarmed, and begged piteously that he would have compassion on him, since in no way he had offended. To this supplication the only answer was a demand for forty hogs, and along with the demand, was conveyed the assurance that with every refusal the number required would be increased by ten. The priest saw there was no hope, and, in accordance with the advice of certain by-standers who knew the character of the prelate well, agreed to give up to the bishop forty fine, well-fed hogs, lest greater injury should befall him ; and this was done accordingly. There was no reason at all for this extortion, adds Giraldus, beyond the possession by the subordinate of a number of fat swine which the superior wanted.

Another of these stories introduces a nobler animal. A certain bishop was holding a council of his diocese ; and while so doing, it was announced to him that a particular church, of which

he was patron, had become vacant by the death of the incumbent. The news was the occasion of joy and not of sorrow to the worthy prelate. "Thank God," said he, "from this loss comes my gain; for certainly he who gives the most to me shall have that benefice." This remark was made, Giraldus tells us, not in secret, but in the hearing of the whole chapter. The son of the dead priest, to whose ears it came, took occasion that day to meet the bishop, and for the gift of twelve large and beautiful oxen, received his father's church. But he had some other difficulties to overcome before he was enabled to take formal possession. He was leaving, at night, the bishop's chamber with the paper appointing him to the position he sought, when he met his archdeacon, who seems to have been lying in wait for him. This officer snatched from his hands the important document and would not give it back until the new priest had promised him, also, six fine oxen, and had given likewise ample security for carrying out his pledge.*

Many stories of oppression of his subordinate clergy Giraldus tells of Peter de Laia, who, if his account is to be trusted, was a shepherd who thought a great deal more of fleecing his flock than of feeding it. But from the turmoils into which this controversy brought him, he was, in some measure, relieved by being made chaplain to Henry II., in 1184, and being sent the following year by that monarch, to accompany, as a sort of confidential adviser, his son Prince John, whom he had determined to make the ruler of Ireland. Giraldus had, in 1183, paid a visit to that island in company with his brother Philip and appears then to have remained in it nearly a year. It is to be kept in mind that in the conquest of Ireland the immediate relations of our author had borne a prominent, if not the most prominent, part; and in that country he would find himself at once in the society of his personal friends. The time which he spent there at first, he tell us, was occupied by him in studying the characteristics of the country and the origin of its inhabitants. The idea of writing a work on the subject was then clearly in his mind, and there is little doubt that the prospect of being enabled to still further prosecute his investigations, led him to welcome gladly the prospect of joining the expe-

* *De Jure et Statu Menevensis Ecclesiæ*, Distinctio I.

dition which was about to proceed, under the conduct of Prince John, to the full establishment of the supremacy of the conquerors.

The English government of Ireland has never been widely celebrated for wisdom. From the very beginning the foreign administration brought little but additional misery to the already miserable inhabitants; and their discontent, their secret or open hostility, has always been a source of weakness and sometimes of danger to the ruling power. In dealing with Ireland, the counsels of the wisest of English statesmen and rulers seem to have been turned into foolishness. Henry II. was an able monarch; he had several sons, all of them bad enough, to be sure: but to rule Ireland—overrun rather than really conquered—he sent John, the weakest and most worthless of all. The first misfortune indeed that befell this unhappy country, was to have this prince given the sovereignty of it. Among all the monarchs who have sat upon the English throne, John claims a special preëminence as being not comparatively but utterly despicable. If in the list of qualities that went to make up his character there was one single virtue, history has not merely neglected to enlarge upon it, it has failed even to allude to it. In him were blended in perfect union all the mean traits, in their meanest form, that distinguished each individual member of the royal house to which he belonged, and no alloy of excellence of any kind marred the complete symmetry of his worthlessness, the various and varying qualities of which nature and education had worked together in blending into a harmonious and homogeneous and utterly contemptible whole. It hardly needs to be said that an expedition undertaken with such a man as leader resulted in ignominious failure. John returned to England in December, 1185, leaving the country in a much worse condition than when he came. Giraldus, however, continued to remain in Ireland until about May, of the following year, collecting the materials for his account of the topography of the island, and of its conquest, if that term can properly be used. The facts thus got together were subsequently digested and put in order in the midst of the many cares which encompassed him while attending the English court; and the works thus prepared furnish,

he tells us, reading for posterity, objects of malice and envy to contemporaries; an occasion of delight to some, of detraction to others.* His boast is not altogether untrue. It is by these writings, and those which describe Wales, that the name of Giraldus has been kept alive, so far as it can be said to have vitality at all. They are, indeed, important enough to warrant all the attention which has been bestowed upon them.

It goes without saying that Giraldus was not long in Ireland without getting into a controversy. The materials in that country are always ready; and a man like our author, who seemed to wander about the earth with a metaphorical chip on his shoulder, was not likely to remain long without finding some one to knock it off, or fancying that some one had been doing so, which as regards his feelings and acts was just the same. In the middle of Lent in the year 1186, the archbishop of Dublin was holding a council in that city; and here the occasion of a quarrel was presented. The prelate himself preached the first day on the sacraments of the church. On the second day he was followed by an abbot, whose sermon was not of a kind to produce peace and good will between the native clergy and the foreign ecclesiastics whom the conquest had brought into the country. The discourse of the abbot, which was a long one, was upon continence. The character of the Irish priesthood has in this respect always stood high in more modern times; but it was of a high type from the very beginning. It was naturally a subject of just pride to the preacher who paid a lofty tribute to the purity of his brethren in the past; but he went on to lament the steady decline in morality then going on before their eyes. For this he saw plainly the reason, and had no hesitation in assigning it. They had been corrupted by the foreign clergy with whom they came into contact; for they could not touch pitch and not be defiled. Nor was this aggressive discourse all. The confusion that followed the delivery of the sermon was further increased by the accusation immediately brought against certain of the foreign clergy, that they had contracted marriage, or to use the language of our author, concubinage, and had publicly taken their wives to their homes. With any such proceeding on their part, Giraldus would naturally have no sympathy.

* *Expugnatio Hibernica*, Liber ii. Chap. xxxiii.

In his eyes matrimony was for the soldiers of the church nothing but that primrose path of dalliance which led directly to the gates of spiritual death. At his instigation the archbishop ordered an immediate investigation. The accused were tried and found guilty and suspended at once from their functions and deprived of the incomes they had been enjoying. Great was the exultation of the native clergy at the result; indeed it assumed a derisive and almost insulting character. But their turn was now to come. There was something to be said on the other side, and the archbishop invited Giraldus to say it. No more pleasing duty could have been assigned him. To preach to a people in regard to their particular imperfections was a task from which most men would have shrunk; but no such feeling found place in the heart of our author. To be able to say distasteful and offensive things to the men he disliked and at the same time to feel that he was simply discharging his duty was a combination of choice and circumstance which is rarely given to men in real life. Giraldus did not fail to improve it to the uttermost. He furnishes a pretty full summary of the address he made to the Irish clergy at the Dublin council; and indeed he was so pleased with it that he inserted it almost word for word in his account of the island. His hearers had certainly no reason to complain of any want of frankness on his part. He began with rather a glowing tribute to their piety, to the care and zeal with which they performed the regular duties of their profession; in particular, he paid the highest praise to their continence, a virtue in which he could not but admit they excelled. But unfortunately they did not keep up in other respects to this severe standard. They fasted and prayed during the day; but they made up for it by getting thoroughly drunk during the night. The hours of light were given to the works of the spirit; but the hours of darkness to the works of the flesh, so far as these are represented by excessive and unbecoming potations. On this drunkenness of the Irish clergy Giraldus has insisted strongly in other places; and it is no wonder that as an author he has not found much favor with the priestly writers of that nation. This, however, was but one item of the general condemnation which he visited upon them all, both clergy and laity, in the course of this sermon. There were good men

among them, he condescendingly assured them, nowhere, indeed, any better ; but the bad were very bad, nowhere, indeed, any worse ; and unfortunately most of them were bad. Among the oats and tares—which two, somewhat strangely to our ears, he joins together—there was wheat to be sure, but there was very little of it ; little grain, but an exceeding deal of chaff. The higher clergy neglected their duty in not preaching to the people, and reproving them for their sins. If they had done as they ought, he went on to say in his usual conciliatory manner, the population would not have been in the brutal and degraded state in which it was. The nation, he told them, was vile almost beyond description. As regards morals, it was wrapped up in vices like a garment ; as regards religion, it was ignorant of the very rudimentary principles of the faith. Petty thefts, highway robbery, perjury, treason were the common practices of all. Neither the tithes nor the first fruits were paid ; marriages were not contracted ; incest was not shunned ; the church of God was not frequented with reverence ; the dead were not buried with proper rites. There is often a ludicrous anti-climax in the roll of vices which Giraldus denounces, which reminds one of De Quincey's complaint that the man who indulges in murder will soon come to think little of robbing ; and that from robbing he will inevitably go on to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and finally wind up his miserable career with incivility and procrastination. It is indeed a striking illustration of the revolution through which the human mind has gone in little as well as great things, that the particular sin which Giraldus inveighed against most bitterly on this occasion will not to the majority of men seem now a sin at all. What he spoke of as being especially detestable, what was contrary not only to the faith but to common decency, was the custom widely prevalent in many parts of Ireland, of men marrying the wives of their deceased brothers.

Giraldus went on to reiterate the charge that the blame for this state of things and for the condition of the laity fell mainly upon the clergy. None of them had lifted up his voice like a trumpet to warn the people of their transgressions. Rather had they all looked on in silence, if not with indifference. No word of remonstrance came from them. By them

no protest was uttered against practices degrading to the body and deadly to the soul. Therefore he added in conclusion, you have confessors among you, but no martyrs; a state of things for which no parallel could be found in any other Christian country. No Irish prelate had gone into exile rather than abandon the duty he owed his church; none of them had shed his blood in defence of its rights and privileges. The nation was brutal and blood-thirsty. But opportunities so favorable had never been improved. The zeal of the ministers of God had never been sufficient in a single instance to gain for one of them the crown of martyrdom.

This point Giraldus seemed to think absolutely convincing as to the negligence and sloth of the Irish clergy. The death of Becket, murdered at the foot of the altar to which he was clinging, had for him a fascination which shows itself constantly in his writings, and had the conditions been favorable would doubtless have inspired him to run cheerfully the risk of a similar fate. Apparently in his eyes no church could prove the purity and divinity of its teachings until some of its members had been murdered. He had, however, appreciation enough of a good retort not to omit one which was made to himself by the archbishop of Cashel, while talking with him on this same subject. To him he uttered his old charge of the criminal slothfulness of the Irish clergy, and the convincing proof of it that was seen in the fact of their possessing no martyrs. The prelate probably had a hearty dislike for the invaders; but his reply was as courteous as it was suggestive. "True," said he "it may be that our people is, as it seems to be, barbarous and uncultivated and cruel. Nevertheless it has always been wont to hold its religious teachers in great honor and reverence, and never on any occasion to stretch out a hostile hand against the saints of God. But now a race has come into the island which both knows how to make martyrs, and has been accustomed to make them. From this time on, Ireland, like other countries, will have its martyrs."*

The invective under the name of a sermon which Giraldus delivered on the occasion here referred to, may be said indeed to mark the feelings which from the beginning prevailed in the

* *Topographia Hibernica*, *Distinctio III.*, Chap. xxxii.

conquering race toward the conquered. It is no wonder that the government was from the first a failure. Little good administration could be expected from men who talked and acted as if it had been a positive misfortune that St. Patrick, instead of converting the natives and destroying the reptiles, had not, on the contrary, spared the latter and annihilated the former. The general state of feeling on both sides Giraldus incidentally lays bare in his writings which treat of Ireland; and with a discussion of these works and of one or two others, upon which his reputation now mainly rests, carrying the notice nearly to the end of the autobiography that has been preserved, we shall finish this account of his life.

[FROM THE NEW ENGLANDER FOR JANUARY, 1880.]

A SCHOLAR OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

BY THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.

Third Article.



A SCHOLAR OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.*

BY THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.

III.

It was in May, 1186, as has been said, that Giraldus came back to England. Once there he seems to have devoted himself, so far as the distractions of court-life would permit, to the business of completing his work describing the country he had left behind. For this, while in Ireland, he had spared sufficient time from his quarrels to collect materials; and the next year or two after his return were given to the task of putting them into proper shape. It was as early, certainly, as March, 1188, that the *Topographia Hibernica* was finished, at least in its original and shortest form. This always remained a favorite production of the author. Up nearly to the time of his death he was at work upon it, and with such results that his latest editor is disposed to look upon the existing manuscripts of it as belonging to at least three and possibly five editions. His regard for it seems to have been largely based upon the fact that he had succeeded in writing a long treatise purporting to describe a country which though near at hand was still little known, and had been enabled to refrain almost wholly from pandering to a depraved taste seeking for secular knowledge, by communicating the least possible amount of information. The proportion of valuable matter contained in the work became constantly smaller with every new revision; though it is hardly proper to speak of anything that Giraldus ever composed as having undergone any such process as revision. For whatever had once been written by him seemed to him thereafter incapable of improvement, at least from the literary point of view. He added constantly; but he never altered, and he never struck out, unless from personal or political considerations.

* The first and second Articles of this series appeared in the numbers for November, 1878, and January, 1879, respectively. Owing to unexpected circumstances the third has been delayed till the present time.

The Topography of Ireland is divided into three books or *Distinctiones* as they are specifically termed. The first of these sets out to give the geography and natural history of the island ; the second, the wonders of nature that are found in it, and the miraculous events that had taken or were still taking place there ; and the third is devoted to a brief account of the inhabitants from the time of the arrival of Cæsara, a grand-daughter of Noah, shortly before the flood, down to the invasion under Henry II. The work is throughout a curious mixture of fact and fiction, in which the former, however, plays, on the whole, a pretty inconspicuous and contemptible part. The first book which treats of the topography and productions of the island is naturally far the most valuable ; though even in this the modern reader is struck by nothing so much as wonder that a man could spend so long a time in a country and manage to see so little. Still in this, when he tells us what he has personally witnessed, Giraldus condescends to impart some knowledge. Like many other men, however, he never learned the desirability of stopping when he had finished. He could not be satisfied with simply stating the information he had collected. In the conventional style prevalent in his day, he felt himself under the necessity of drawing moral lessons from it ; and the spiritual reflections so exceed in number and space the facts upon which they are founded, that in the complete form which the work finally assumed, one seems to be reading a treatise for the edification of the soul rather than the instruction of the mind. Everything is emblematic. For instance, the cranes, he tells us, are birds of such wary habits that they take turns in keeping watch ; and those assigned this duty stand on one foot and hold a stone in the other, so that if by chance they fall asleep the dropping of the stone may awaken them to renewed attention. These birds are a type of the bishops of the church, who are to be kept eternally vigilant by holding in their mind some sacred care like a suspended stone. This is a short specimen, given merely as an illustration of what makes up the greatest portion of the work. The analogies, to be sure, in all these cases never run upon four legs, rarely upon three, and frequently find difficulty in hobbling along upon one ; but the goodness of the motive was in such cases regarded as an ample

apology for the poorness of the performance. Throughout this whole book, indeed, Giraldus followed the practice of his predecessors who wrote on natural history only for the sake of "improving" it, in the technical language of homiletics, and he goes constantly out of his way to insert long sermons which are tacked to the main matter he is discussing by the flimsiest of fastenings. The controversial arguments he occasionally employs are likewise curiously characteristic of methods of reasoning prevalent in his time. He repeats, for instance, the story universally accepted in the middle ages, of the geese which spring from barnacles attached to wood in the sea; and he adds a remark which is historically of some value as showing the desire on the part of many to evade the restriction which forbade, at particular times, the use of meat. In certain parts of Ireland, he tells us that the flesh of the barnacle-geese was eaten on fast-days by bishops and by religious men generally. It was looked upon by them as being a sort of allowable food, on such occasions, because though it was itself flesh, it was not born of flesh. Giraldus was too determined a stickler for the observances of the church to be led away by any such argument. He never thinks, to be sure, of doubting the fact, from which these lax observers of the ecclesiastical law had drawn their inference that this kind of food was permissible. But for all that he has no hesitation in asserting that they are entirely in error. "If any one had eaten the thigh of our first parent," he says triumphantly, "as being flesh not born of flesh, could he look upon himself as being free from the guilt of eating flesh?" To this argument he felt that it would be in vain for them to attempt a reply.

Along with some facts derived from acute personal observation, this first book contains many marvellous statements, such as, to be sure, are common in nearly all the writers of that age. Still as in his learning Giraldus surpassed most of his contemporaries, so he did in his capacity for swallowing the impossible. Little limit apparently existed to his credulity; and, educated man as he was, there was nothing too monstrous or miraculous for him to disbelieve. He is not simply content with stating that no venomous reptiles are to be found in Ireland; he goes on to assure us, though upon the authority of

others, that serpents shipped to that country die as soon as they come under the influence of its air ; that poison loses there all its mortal qualities ; that toads accidentally transported to that island in vessels and thrown upon the shore immediately recognized the situation, and paid a proper respect to the virtue of the climate by throwing themselves upon their backs in the presence of admiring spectators, and then bursting in two. As if this was not enough, he farther assures us that the soil of Ireland carried to other lands and sprinkled upon any place is sufficient to drive away any venomous reptiles. In fact this characteristic quality was used to decide the question whether the isle of Man belonged to England or to Ireland. Poisonous serpents were taken thither. They survived ; and there was a general agreement that this fact settled all disputes as to ownership.

But it was in the second book that Giraldus gave free rein to his faith in the marvellous. The wonders he there recounted were, indeed, so extraordinary, that in the preface to this portion of his work he felt it necessary to defend himself from the charge of undue credulity. He recognizes the fact that some of the things which he is about to mention might seem to the reader either impossible or ridiculous ; but he asserts with the utmost positiveness that nothing could be found in the book which he himself had not seen with his own eyes, or had learned with great care from the evidence of men of the most trustworthy character, familiar with the facts of which they had given him information. Some of them are worth mentioning as specimens of the facts which men of high reputation for veracity were then in the habit of communicating to strangers possessed of an inquiring turn of mind. In Munster, Giraldus tells us, there is a lake containing two islands ; in the larger one no woman, or no animal of the female sex could enter without immediately dying ; even the female bird would not accompany its mate thither. In the smaller island nobody ever died by a natural death ; and the unfortunate man who was groaning under the burden of years had to be rowed to the main land in order to pass away from a life which had become too painful to endure. In like manner he tells us stories of islands which float ; of fish with golden teeth ; of

a mill that will not run on Sunday, nor grind stolen grain; of a bell that has a perverse habit of going every night from the church in which it is hung to the church from which it had been taken, unless solemnly enjoined by its keeper to stay at home; and of fountains with peculiar qualities, one turning the hair gray, another keeping it from turning gray. No small portion of the book is taken up with a choice collection of miracles performed by the saints of the Irish Church. Giraldus, indeed, is forced to admit that the saints of the island were apt to display a very vindictive temper, a characteristic which he notices elsewhere as belonging also to those of Wales. He is rather puzzled to account for the exhibition of this quality on the part of these men in their heavenly home. But he gives an explanation which is eminently satisfactory. Both in Ireland and in Wales the country abounded in robbers, and lacked places of refuge; and fugitives, accordingly, were largely in the habit of seeking safety, not in castles or fortified towns, but in the various ecclesiastical establishments. It became necessary, therefore, for its own protection, that the church should inflict severe punishment upon all who sought to violate its sanctuary. Enemies of this kind were doubtless numerous. The saints, in consequence, got into a bad habit, during their mortal life, of laying the rod upon the back of those who offended them with an unsparing hand. This disposition they carried with them to the other world; and the result was that their punishment of evil-doers often seemed to be almost of a revengeful kind.

The third book, which treats of the inhabitants of Ireland, begins with an account of its earliest settlement. This was by Cæsara, the grand-daughter of Noah. She had heard that there was to be a deluge, and accordingly set out to seek an uninhabited island in some remote part of the world; hoping that a place wherein sin had not been committed would be spared from the punishment of sin. But she might better have stayed at home. All the ships were lost except the one in which she herself sailed. Though she landed on the island, though the very mound which marked her burial-place was still visible, she was not able to escape the common fate that overtook the children of a fallen race. At this point Giraldus is

fairly perplexed. No survivor of the ruined world had been left to tell the tale that befell the Irish colonists. If every one perished in the deluge, how could the memory of this event be handed down? Still his resources are equal to every emergency; indeed, out of this difficulty he gets very easily. To wrestle with problems such as these is something that he does not feel himself called upon to do. The event it is his duty to narrate; to discuss the truth of it, to explain the unexplainable, is a matter out of his province. "Let those who first write history see to that," he says. "My business is to state facts, not to call them in question." This is a broad and comfortable basis upon which to stand in writing history; and it yields frequently as satisfactory results as the modern practice of devising a theory to account for what is unaccountable.

Still Giraldus in the composition of this work hit pretty accurately the taste of the times; and the number of manuscripts of it still extant show that it was by no means an unpopular production, though he often complained subsequently that neither this nor his other works had brought him either remuneration or preferment. Nor did it escape some strictures. Reviewing, to be sure, was not then carried on, at least on any organized scale. Nevertheless it existed; for the critical faculty has never been lacking at any period in the history of the human race, no matter in what condition may have been the creative. As in the case of many greater writers, however, we should never have known of the attack, had it not been for the pains that the author himself took to notice and thereby preserve it. In his preface to the history of the Conquest of Ireland he takes the opportunity to put the wretched scribbler who had assailed him into a pillory where he was forever to remain as an object at which time could point its unmoving finger of scorn. In this preface he tells us in his own grand style that envy had been striving hard to gnaw at and to mangle his treatise on the Topography of Ireland, a work, he adds parenthetically, by no means to be looked upon with contempt. All scholars, he asserts, were in perfect agreement as to the peculiar elegance of its style. Malice itself, personified in the reviewer, was ashamed or afraid to rail at the surpassing excellence of the first and third books. But the evil

nature of the critic would not suffer him long to act a feigned part, and the inborn depravity of the man burst out in a furious attack upon the second book, the plain object of which was to discredit the whole work by showing the falsity of a part. Who this lineal ancestor of the able editor of modern times was, Giraldus does not tell us ; but he lets us know that his contemptible objections were directed against the marvellous character of the stories contained in the Topography. The critic found fault with specific statements made in the work, such as that of a wolf talking with a priest ; of a man with the extremities of an ox ; of a goat and of a lion in love with a woman. To petty cavils like these, Giraldus could make a triumphant reply. "You," he says, addressing this miscreant, who had presumed to criticise him, "you who profess to be so disgusted with these stories, have you not read in the book of Numbers the conversation that took place between Balaam and his ass?" He then goes on to hurl at the presumptuous critic the work of the Fathers, with all the marvels and miracles contained in them. These certainly were full of facts wonderful enough to crush utterly the unbelief of any ordinary doubter. But not content with these, Giraldus appealed likewise to classical writers, and left not a particle of ground for the unhappy sceptics to stand on either in the Christian or pagan world.

But our author was not one to be satisfied merely with negative efforts to defend the veracity of his work ; he took a peculiar measure of his own to extend its reputation. Lucian has preserved or invented a tale in regard to Herodotus ; how the Father of History, anxious to make known the results of his labors, had seized upon the occasion furnished by the Olympic games. There in the lower part of the temple he had recited in the presence of assembled Greece the story of the Persian war. There he had been crowned with the admiration of all ; there his books had been honored with the names of the nine Muses. This was an incident calculated of itself to fire the heart of a man like Giraldus, and he resolved to reproduce in the modern world a counterpart to the famous scene which antiquity had presented. He tells us that when his work had been completed and corrected, he made up his mind that his light should no longer be hid under a bushel, but should be

set upon a candle-stick lofty enough to send a good deal of light into the darkness which still surrounded him and his writings. Therefore he determined to recite himself his treatise at Oxford, and to do this in the presence of the assembled inhabitants. That place he fixed upon because of the number of the clergy dwelling there, and because of their great superiority in learning. As his work was divided into three books, so the recitation of it was spread over three successive days. On the first he called together all the poor of the town to the reading; and to be sure of their taking to the intellectual food furnished to them, he supplied them also with food of a more substantial nature. It is not hard to believe that under such circumstances the recitation was numerously attended, and the production itself met with unqualified praise. Certainly no surer method could be taken to stop the mouth of adverse criticism than filling it with meat. On the second day he received all the instructors in the various departments, and scholars of greatest knowledge and reputation. On the third day the rest of the students were invited, with the soldiers of the town and many of the citizens. The whole affair, according to his statement, was noble and magnificent, and recalled the memory of the ancient time of the poets, when the world paid homage to its intellectual rulers as well as to its temporal ones. Nothing like it had ever taken place in England in his age; nor did history recall any such proceeding in the past.

It was but a short time after the publication of the *Topography of Ireland*, that the *History of its Conquest*—the *Expugnatio Hibernica*—appeared. Of this, he does not speak, however, in his autobiography; and it may possibly be that he did not regard it as a work redounding to his credit. Certainly in one of the prefaces to it, he gives incidentally a curious picture of the view that was taken during his time of literature in general, and in particular of historical writings. He seems to see the reader, he tells us, when he finds everything clear and simple, turning up the nose of derision, protruding the lip of contempt, and making that general disarrangement of his features which would be most highly representative of disgust; and finally giving still more visible expression to his mean opinion of the work by hurling the book away. It

was clearly regarded as something to an author's discredit that he should write anything easy of comprehension. Giraldus takes some pains to vindicate himself for having followed a course so derogatory. His history, he says, was intended for laymen, for princes that had received little education. It, therefor, had to be composed in a plain and perspicuous style. Indeed he did not stop with this apology for being intelligible. He daringly went so far as to claim that it was justifiable to use the words of the people when the acts of themselves and of their rulers were to be recounted. In fact as he became warm in the discussion of this matter, he assumed the offensive. In the case of all the subjects upon which he had written, he assures us, that abandoning and even spitting upon the hard and austere style of certain authors, he had labored with the greatest zeal to make what he said clear to the comprehension of all, free from doubtful meanings and involved constructions; though he is careful to add that in the pursuit of this object he had not refrained from adding to the weight of matter the ornament of elegant expression. Yet it is plain that in spite of his courageous words he felt that in writing a treatise giving an account of the Irish expedition, he was derogating a little from the dignity of letters. In the dedication to Richard I., then Count of Poitou, he makes a half apology for having undertaken at all a work of this kind. He had been desired by friends to write the famous deeds of his time, which he had seen with his own eyes or learned from the mouths of trustworthy witnesses. So at their request and for the sake of posterity he had determined to put into permanent form the account of their doings; though amid the duties and distraction of court-life it was hard for him to find leisure to compose a work which he himself would have time to revise before it should fall into the hands of unseen and envious critics. The theme selected was, he admitted, narrow in extent, was dry in its nature; it dealt with matters that did not belong to cultivation and refinement. Still he could adorn it, barren as it was, with the graces of his style, and there was for writing it this compensation, that it furnished, as it were, a field of practice upon which his unskilled pen could disport and make trial of itself.

This is not the only place where Giraldus throws light unconsciously upon the sentiment, prevalent in his time in regard to the subjects about which the highest class of minds could most worthily occupy themselves in writing. The view is so different from the modern one that it will bear further exemplification. In the preface to a later production—the *Description of Wales*, addressed to Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury,—he enumerates the historical or topographical treatises he had previously written, and he remarks that those who had affection for him had remonstrated with him for spending his time and talents in the production of works that misemployed the one and brought no credit to the other. It is the same, they tell him, as if a great painter such as was Zeuxis, from whom the world waited in anxious expectation for the representation of some magnificent palace or temple, should put forth all the resources of his art to depict a mean hovel or some object contemptible in its very nature. When, therefore, so many illustrious objects existed worthy of his pen, what right had he to adorn with the flowers of rhetoric, and to celebrate with the charm of letters corners of the earth so remote as Ireland, and Wales, and Britain. Others attacked him on a different side. Great powers had been conferred upon him by the gift of the Creator. These should not be spent in treating of earthly objects, but should be directed exclusively to those loftier topics connected with the spiritual world. From God we have received our faculties; therefore to the celebration of him alone should these faculties be exclusively devoted, and not indirectly but directly. Giraldus did not deny the general truth contained in these remonstrances. But vain as he was, he was a good deal less of a fool than most of his contemporaries who were men of letters; at least gleams of sense often lighted up his conduct, though they did not always give a remarkable illumination to his words. He remembered that the fame of Troy, of Thebes, of Athens, and of Rome had been widely celebrated in history. He reflected that to their story it was not in his power to add anything, while he might be able to hand down to posterity the memory of events that were taking place in his time, might rescue noble deeds from the darkness of oblivion; above all he could counterbalance the

meanness of his subject by the majesty of his style. This he felt to be no worthless nor unpraiseworthy undertaking. He did not disguise from himself or his readers that these were topics which were far beneath his abilities. But he looked upon them as the exercise of his youth, by which his mind should first try its powers before venturing upon any more daring venture. And when these sparrow-flights, as it were, of composition should give him strength of wing and confidence in himself—which last to the modern reader seems hardly necessary for him to have waited for—then he would proceed to wing his way to that upper air of speculation in which reason swoons and faith alone can bear up the soul. His, then, should be the treasure of that science of sciences, of that science that alone deserves the name, the effluence of the divine, upon whom the other so-called sciences wait as handmaids, and the very prints of whose feet they with reverent hearts adore.

Even more fortunately for himself than for posterity Giraldus thus came to the conclusion to compose works, which ordinary men could understand before devoting himself to the composition of that most excellent treatise on that most sacred of sciences upon which he expected to rear a permanent name. Were it not for these works which he professed to hold in such slight estimation, it is pretty safe to say that his name would not even have attained to the position it now holds among the illustrious obscure. And it must be acknowledged that his qualifications for writing the history of the invasion of Ireland, or conquest as he called it, were of an exceptional character. He was contemporary with the events which he described. It was in 1169, when he was about one and twenty years old, that the first expedition set sail from Great Britain for Ireland. Its leader was his uncle Robert Fitz-Stephen, and among those who belonged to it were his own brother Robert de Barri, and his cousin Meiler Fitz-Henry. Besides these, many of those that were concerned in this and in later expeditions must have been intimate friends of his own, or at least acquaintances; for the first levies for the Irish invasion were all raised in Wales. But in addition he had in abundance those qualities which make history readable. He was entirely one-sided in his opinions and prejudiced in his feelings, and whatever he

believed he believed so thoroughly that he could see little sense in any other view, and no sense at all in those holding it. The violence of his language was naturally proportioned to the strength of his faith. An impartial account of any event was one of the last things he troubled his head about. Whatever made for his own side, he accepted without hesitation; whatever went against it he denounced with the same unscrupulousness. The consequence is that one always knows precisely where to find him, and is never misled by that affectation of weighing evidence which in so many modern histories imparts dullness to the narrative without adding anything, when one carefully examines it, to our confidence in its accuracy. At any rate, the method of writing history followed by Giraldus, if not the most trustworthy, is certainly much the most interesting. The judicial mind is doubtless in its element in deciding the evidence for or against the truth of a given fact, or in settling the claims of rival statements to the throne of probability, to which in the end it often turns out that neither one of them is entitled. But it is apt to be tedious in narration; it does not often express itself entertainingly. Decisions of courts on the most exciting topics are rarely lively reading; while the speeches of counsel on the dullest not unfrequently are.

Still, in spite of these natural advantages on the part of Giraldus, the account of the Irish invasion is not what might have been fairly expected. In fact it was never really completed; and some part of it, moreover, is devoted to a narration of things that never happened in Ireland, and to reports and speeches that were never made anywhere. Yet, imperfect as it is, it is the leading authority on the events that took place during the original invasion. Many of its statements must, however, be taken with a much larger number of the grains of allowance than the quantity we feel obliged to swallow with most so-called historical facts. He naturally saw to it that his relations should receive their due, and he omits no opportunity to expatiate upon the merits and services of his brother Robert and his cousin Meiler. In imitation of the classical writers he introduced the leaders on both sides as making speeches to their soldiers; and their orations contain frequent references to personages and events which, if genuine, would prove that these

barbarians had been studying for a sort of civil-service examination in history. They likewise abound in those swelling sentiments, to give vent to which on all occasions delighted the heart of Giraldus. That the Irish were uncivilized enough, he lets us know without perhaps intending it. One suggestive incident is worth recounting. It was to reinstate Dermot McMurchard in his principality of Leinster that the expedition was originally undertaken. In one of the first battles in which the invaders were victorious, two hundred heads of the defeated and slain were cut off and laid at the feet of this chieftain. As he turned them over one by one and recognized who they were, he raised his hand on high and exultingly gave thanks to the Creator for his goodness. Not content with this act of piety he found on further examination the face of one whom he particularly hated. Lifting the head to his mouth by the hair and ears, he bit off the nose and lips with his teeth. After reading such an account as this, it is delicious to find a little further on this amiable prince represented as making a speech to his soldiers, in which he tells his troops that on their side they have humility to oppose to the pride of the enemy, right and justice to oppose to wrong, and mildness and moderation to oppose to arrogance and violence.

Before either of the works on Ireland appeared, however, a series of events had taken place which appealed powerfully to the two feelings which exercised the most sway over the heart of Giraldus—his desire for the glorification of the church and for the display of himself. Henry of England and Philip Augustus of France, had met at Gisors, in 1186, and pledged themselves to take the cross. The nobility of England followed in the wake of their master. To secure the coöperation of the people of Wales also, the king sent Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, to that country in 1188, in order to preach the crusade. With him went Giraldus on this mission to persuade the inhabitants of his native land to volunteer in the war which had for its object the expulsion of the infidels from Palestine. It was on Ash Wednesday that the archbishop reached Radnor and began his work. Here our author himself took the vow to enter upon the crusade, and in this

was followed by his old antagonist, Peter de Laia, bishop of St. David's. It was entirely in accordance with the fiery and impulsive nature of Giraldus that he should devote all his energies to the effort of making the mission successful; and fortunately it was equally in accordance with his disposition to write a full account of it. This work, which he called *Itinerarium Cambrie*, is not only a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the country at that time; it gives incidentally a most vivid picture of the methods employed to raise recruits for the crusades.

The party entered Wales, as has been implied, from Herefordshire. They went first through the Southern counties, and after making their way to the North along the Western coast, turned eastward, crossed the Dee near Chester, and after passing through Shropshire reached finally Hereford, the place from which they had set out. It was a hard journey; for their course led through some of the most difficult portions of that mountainous country; and in addition to the ruggedness of the roads, if roads they could be called, their path lay frequently over foaming torrents and in the dangerous neighborhood of quicksands. The archbishop beguiled the tediousness of the journey by reading or having read to him every day the treatise on the Topography of Ireland, which its author presented to him when the party arrived at Llanddewi, the residence of the archdeacon of Brecknock. Everywhere they preached the duty of joining the expedition which was to set out in order to deliver Jerusalem which, after nearly a hundred years of Christian rule, had again fallen under the dominion of a non-Christian power. While Giraldus does not fail to let us know of the effect wrought by his own persuasive exhortations, it is simple justice to him to say that in the Itinerary he takes to himself no undue proportion of the credit for the success which attended the mission. He is always careful to let the archbishop have an equal share of the honors with the archdeacon. One thing that struck him with astonishment—though it may not seem so surprising to us—was that addresses delivered in the Latin or the French tongue were apparently full as effective in stirring the multitude as those delivered in the language which the men of the country could understand.

But set speeches were only the occasion, not the cause of the breaking out of enthusiasm with which this great popular movement was welcomed. Multitudes of men meeting together for a common object inflamed one another with a common fanaticism. The moral pressure brought to bear upon all who could go was such as great monarchs, the most averse to the enterprise, like Philip Augustus of France, were not able to resist. Naturally, therefore, it was not likely to be withstood by men inferior in rank. Tears and entreaties were of little avail to dissuade the ardent and warlike from pledging themselves to this holy cause; and Giraldus tells of garments cast aside and left behind in the hands of friends and relatives seeking to hold back the enthusiastic soldier of the cross from pressing forward to sign his name. It is very clear from the account given by our author that it was the women who in most cases sought to keep husbands or sons from joining the expedition; an expedition, which the sure forecast of love, unaffected by appeals to religious obligation or military glory, saw would be profitless to all and fatal to most. It was they who were most successful in counteracting the influence of the exhortations to duty pronounced in the name and with all the authority of religion, and to the full as fascinating appeals to the prospect of distinction to be achieved in war. Instances of this are common. Rhys, the prince of South Wales, was intending to take the cross, but was prevented from carrying out his purpose by the entreaties of his wife. Giraldus tells us on one occasion when the party were journeying from Abergavenny to Usk, a certain nobleman of that region named Arthenius, came to meet them, and apologized for his delay in not having presented himself sooner. He was asked if he purposed to take the cross: "Such a thing," he answered, "ought not to be done without the advice of friends." The archbishop saw at once the hidden danger, and went straight to the mark by appealing to his victim's masculine vanity. "You are then intending," said he, "to take counsel with your wife." The countenance of the nobleman fell, and he replied in a shamefaced way that it was not meet when entering upon the work to be done by a man to ask the advice of a woman; and he suffered himself at once to be signed with the cross. If he

actually went on the expedition little doubt need be entertained that he had plenty of both leisure and reason to repent those few moments of masculine folly.

But this conduct on the part of the female portion of the population evidently deepened the dislike which the stern soldier of the church felt for that perverse sex whose fascinations proved so often superior to the attractions of the gospel he preached. To his low opinion of them he had pretty uniformly given vent, previously, on the slightest opportunity or provocation. This is, indeed, a sentiment which he shared with many of the clerical order both of his own and of later times; and curious illustrations of it crop out in all of his writings. Thus in his *Topography of Ireland* he comments in this wise upon a somewhat striking fact in natural history: "In nearly all kinds of living beings," he remarks, "nature has made the male the stronger; but in these birds, (i. e. falcons), and in all others which live by prey, the boldness and strength of the female is greater." From this he draws the inference that this sex in the human species also is far more disposed to violence and wickedness than the male. Philosophical observations of a nature akin to these enliven the pages of the *Itinerary*, and account very satisfactorily for the perversity of the conduct of the feminine multitude. It is nothing remarkable, he says in one place, that women should carry out into practice their habits of inborn iniquity; and he quotes liberally from sacred and profane writers to prove the natural depravity of the sex. Still these wayward creatures, who seem to have had more sense, individually, than the whole of the male population combined, could do but little against the enthusiasm awakened by this solemn procession moving through the wilds of Wales, which in its triumphal progress carried everything before it. By the time the mission was finished three thousand had volunteered. They were not always ideal soldiers of the church that were collected into this holy band. At Usk, Giraldus remarks with naive simplicity that a large number of the most notorious robbers and murderers living in that neighborhood were converted; and much to the surprise, and doubtless much more to the gratification of the spectators, took the sign of the cross. Yet, after

all, the entreaties of women and the invectives of Giraldus might have been spared, so far as concerns the particular expedition proposed by Henry II. That monarch never lived to carry out his intention of going to the Holy Land. In consequence of the delay that took place many were absolved from their vow of joining the crusading army; and among these was our author. But the Welsh mission did at least this good service, that it prompted Giraldus to write an account of it; and to it we are indebted in consequence for a life-like picture both of the country and of the times.

The Itinerary of Wales was dedicated to Stephen Langton, who had succeeded Baldwin as archbishop of Canterbury. It was doubtless due to this fact that in this work Giraldus did not assume to himself all the credit for the success of the mission. He graciously allowed the head of the English church some little influence in bringing about the result for which they were both working. For any failure, however, to set forth in the Itinerary the surpassing excellence of his own services he took care to make up amply in the autobiography. Here he lets us know distinctly how great was the effect produced by his personal influence and eloquence. It was at Haverford, in the county of Pembroke, at a gathering of the clergy and laity, that he made his first speech. The archbishop of Canterbury had previously addressed the multitude; but to his urgent appeals to join the crusade few were found to respond. In surprise and sorrow he exclaimed: "O Lord, what a stiff-necked generation is this!" But the scene underwent an entire change as soon as the archdeacon of Brecknock had spoken. Giraldus informs us that on that occasion God had inspired him with so all-conquering a persuasiveness, so resistless an eloquence, that the very choicest representatives of the arms-bearing population hurried forward with eagerness to be signed with the sign of the cross. He divided his address into three parts; and the close of each he wound up with a powerful and impassioned appeal. Three perorations of this kind were too much for any audience to stand. So violent was the pressure to hasten and be enrolled among the soldiers of the church that the archbishop himself was scarcely able to keep off the crowd from his own person. A fever of enthusiasm had taken possession of

the multitude. Men wept under the intense excitement. Often afterward did the archbishop declare that never on any one day had he seen so many tears shed as on this occasion at Haverford. Though Giraldus asserts that this was all the Lord's doing, he likewise lets it plainly be inferred that the whole transaction was a particularly convincing evidence of the wisdom displayed by the divine agency in selecting the instruments best adapted to accomplish its work. It is made clear by this, he remarks, that the Spirit gives its inspiration where it pleases and when it pleases; and he quotes with evident satisfaction an assertion of St. Jerome that the praises of the preacher are the tears of his auditors. It is to be added that these effective orations were all delivered in the French or the Latin tongue, neither of which languages few if any of the hearers could understand. His excessive vanity does not allow Giraldus to see the inference as to the actual influence of the oratory that would naturally be drawn from such a fact; and he recounts with great gravity a speech made to his kinsman, Rhys, the prince of South Wales, by a certain John Spang, a professional fool. "You ought," said the jester, "to be much in love with your relative, the archdeacon, because he has sent to-day a hundred or more of your people to the sepulchre of Christ; and I believe if he had spoken in the Welsh tongue not a single one of the whole multitude would have remained a subject of yours."

In numerous other places Giraldus does not suffer his modesty so to prevail over his love of the precise fact as to conceal from us the effect produced by his incomparably elegant addresses. Nor does he deny that the whole mission would have failed of success if it had been obliged to depend upon the tame appeals of others instead of his own finished and fervent oratory. According to him the archbishop was so impressed by his transcendent abilities, that he had selected him as the one to write the account of the expedition which was to recover the Holy Land from the grasp of Saladin and the Saracens. It is certainly to be regretted that this plan was never carried out. A history of a crusade, as told by Giraldus, in which he himself would have been almost certain to be the central figure about which kings and princes and minor per-

sonages resolved, would have been a contribution to literature unique in its character and inexpressibly entertaining in its details. For Baldwin's judgment our author naturally had a great respect. He tells us how the archbishop read and re-read the *Topography of Ireland* which had been presented to him on his first entrance into Wales. The spiritual lessons which had been drawn from the facts of natural history, were in particular the subjects of special praise and almost indeed of reverent admiration. Giraldus takes occasion to glance aside at his critics in commenting upon the singular modesty and discretion of his ecclesiastical superior. Nothing would Baldwin say either in praise or blame of the work until he finished the whole of it; for well he knew how often the beginning differs from the middle and the middle from the end. But having read it through his praises were poured forth in profusion. He enjoined upon its author that the gift of this matchless style granted him by the Creator, should not be buried in a napkin; that his time should never be wasted, but should be spent in study and in writing, whereby his name might be handed down to after ages. For himself, the archbishop said he would gladly cherish such marvellous elegance of expression, did he possess it, more than earthly riches which were sure to perish or worldly dignities that would soon pass away. These, indeed, were vanity; whereas the works of our author were of the kind that never faded from the memory of man, but as time rolled on became dearer and more precious to the generations to come. It is in some such language as this that our author records the opinion of his superior, though his words are abbreviated. Indeed self-interest, to say nothing of inability, would be sufficient to prevent any wise man from undertaking the task of rendering literally into English anything reported by Giraldus in praise of himself. The most vigorous efforts of the translator would always seem tame and spiritless when contrasted with the enthusiasm and glow which pervade the commendations to be found in the original.

Let us return for a while from the autobiography to bibliography. The first edition of the *Itinerary of Wales* appeared, according to its latest editor, in the spring or summer of 1191; the second with numerous additions which have no particular

reference to the subject, about 1197; the third after the summer of 1213. Among the writings of Giraldus this has conspicuous claims to attention. It is far from being a perfect work looked at from the purely literary point of view; for in the editions after the first the author managed to lug in any quantity of matter that had no particular connection with the account of the progress through Wales. It was not to be expected, indeed, that Giraldus should ever surrender an opportunity to adorn his narrative with a marvellous tale; and in particular, in the first of the two books of which this treatise is composed, we have the usual complement of monstrosities and miracles with which he was wont to regale his readers. He tells us of a spring running with milk; of a river flowing with wine; of fields suddenly ripening in the most obliging way, a month before the proper time, in order to supply the destitute with food; of a soldier, who not only went through the pains of labor, but gave birth to a calf; of unclean spirits infesting houses, throwing dirt on the occupants, cutting holes in their garments, and, worse than all, taunting the dwellers with the mean things of which they had been guilty. In particular he tells us of one demon in the shape of a red-haired young man, who gave his name as Simon. This one entered a mansion, dispossessed the steward, and proceeded to discharge the duties of the office himself, which he did in the most skillful manner. Indeed Giraldus gives such a glowing account of the conduct and management of the intruder, that one is disposed to sympathize with the spirit when he is turned away simply because he is discovered holding secret conversations at night in the neighborhood of a mill and a pool of water; for one feels that he is far from being the first or the last red-haired but worthy young man who has been accustomed to spend the hours after dark in a similar way.

But in spite of the marvellous tales which he inserted into his writings, this treatise was a most important one; and perhaps is surpassed in value only by another treatise which came out about 1194, treating of the Topography of Wales. This last work is remarkable for being free, comparatively speaking, from all extraneous matter. It is divided into two books, the first of which gives some account of the country

and of the character and virtues of the inhabitants, especially of their courage, their quickness of understanding, their generosity, and their devotion to the faith. But Giraldus was not one of those patriotic souls who loved his country and his countrymen so fervently that he could not see anything but their good qualities. In his own opinion he dwelt pretty near the serene summits of intellectual and moral elevation; and from these heights could look with a good deal of composure and critical skill upon the faults and follies of his fellow-beings, including his friends, who were painfully threading their way through the mazes of right and wrong on the plains below. If, therefore, he enlarged upon their virtues, he was equally eloquent upon their vices; and indeed, discusses his own people with that cosmopolitan impartiality which characterizes in so marked a degree the modern ideal citizen of the world. According to him the men of this nation were of the most fickle character. They were always ready to begin any new undertaking; and on the other hand they were just as ready to abandon it after it had once been begun. Constant in nothing but their inconstancy, they were upon the whole more tenacious in iniquity than in anything else. As they had no reverence for the truth, they did not pay the slightest deference to an oath. If anything could be gained by swearing to a lie, they were always ready to perjure themselves. No matter whether the cause was a civil or ecclesiastical one, each party was always prepared to swear to what was deemed expedient for its own side; and the only disgrace that could befall any one concerned in the transaction resulted not from the disposition manifested to tell a lie, but from the lack of skill that suffered any one to be caught in telling it. In addition to their deceitfulness, they were the most inveterate robbers imaginable. Every method of violating the eighth commandment, from petty thieving to grand larceny, was familiar to them; and they were equally impartial in exhibiting their accomplishments in this line not only upon strangers and enemies but likewise upon their personal friends. In battle at the first charge they were terrible in their impetuosity, their cries, and their appearance; but if the onset failed, they were easily thrown into disorder; and once really worsted they had no

resource but the most disgraceful flight. This, however, was attended by the advantage that they were thus enabled to live to fight another day ; and accordingly, undiscouraged by past failures, they were always ready for new enterprises ; and as a result of this characteristic, while they were easily conquered in battle, they were with difficulty conquered in war. Seldom, indeed, have the military qualities of the Celtic races been described more accurately and impartially than by this churchman of the twelfth century who had devoted himself to scholastic studies. But there are plenty of passages scattered through the volumes on both Ireland and Wales which give the reader a high idea of the justness of the views of Giraldus whenever he comes to speak of the method of dealing with turbulent and discontented populations. His administrative qualities, so far as they find expression in his writings, must have been of a high order. Had he been placed in a position of responsibility, he might have acted the part of a politician ; but the views to which he gives utterance are almost invariably the views of a statesman.

Our author, who noticed everything and introduced everything, whether related to his subject or not, in both of the treatises on Wales, calls attention to the close resemblance existing between words of different languages, especially between the Latin, the Greek, and the Welsh. The similarities in the two last he can account for easily. Though Giraldus speaks contemptuously of the fabulous history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, yet he was clearly a full believer in the Trojan descent of the Britons, and that part of the story which represents the ancestors of the latter people as having been long resident in Greece was not doubted by him in the slightest. As their forefathers had dwelt in that country so long, it was not unnatural that they should have picked up many Greek words. But it was by no means to these two tongues that our author confined his observations. He traces the word *salt* through the Greek, Welsh, Irish, Latin, French, English, and what he calls the Teutonic language, which seems here to mean the Low-Dutch. It is apparently on the strength of one or two statements of this kind that Mr. Freeman calls Giraldus "the father of comparative philology."* If this be the reason, no

* *Contemporary Review*, September, 1878, p. 216.

one ever founded a new science with more ease. But it is possible there may be another explanation for giving him this title, which will, at any rate prevent the work of Bopp from being entirely anticipated, even if the laurels of that scholar are to be stripped from his brow. There may be a better reason for ascribing to our author the paternity of the science of comparative philology than the fact that he found that the word denoting *salt* bore a close resemblance in half-a-dozen different languages. This is the manly stand which he took in regard to the name that belonged by right to his native country. Men persisted in calling it Wales; whereas its real and only proper designation was Cambria. On this point Giraldus was very earnest. He recurred to it again and again. In his eyes he who styled Cambria Wales was but little better than one of the wicked; though there is no evidence that such a one was to him so completely enveloped by that atmosphere of depravity which clothes as a garment the ignorant, the stupid, and the iniquitous who still speak of the oldest form of our language as Anglo-Saxon.

It is not to be supposed that while writing these treatises Giraldus was resting from other occupations. He continued to be employed in public affairs, and it is by no means improbable that his advice and assistance were both needed and sought in dealing with the unquiet and refractory population of Wales. According to his own account he refused two bishoprics in his native country, which fell vacant, that of Bangor and that of Llandaff. We may suspect, however, that the offers if seriously made were not pressed upon him with the most irresistible urgency. Four in all, of such offers, he tells us, he had now refused; two in Ireland and two in Wales: for as he assures us, striving for nothing of that kind, he had with a serene and lofty mind scornfully trodden under foot every proposal of that nature; for at that time he neither desired nor sought for anything further. To his studies his whole heart was given; and though a follower of the court he nevertheless found leisure to write histories. His labors did not cease with the hours of the day; for at night he was poring over his books and preparing his works by the light of the lamp. Still for some cause he was not altogether satisfied; and the reasons

which he gives are not in absolute harmony with that love of calm and undisturbed study which he asserts to have been then the ruling feeling of his life. For it, to be sure, he left the court; but he gives as the considerations which induced him to leave it, that all hopes from it were at an end; that its promises were kept to the ear only; that no promotions took place in it according to merit. It seems, in fact, that like many who start out with the idea of leading their lives in accordance with the theory that virtue is its own reward, he had come in process of time to be dissatisfied with the wages he was to receive. At any rate, for the reasons given above, he tells us in his own grand style that he determined to quit the court, to abandon the tumult of its stormy seas, to retire within himself, and to seek the seclusion of the schools as a secure and tranquil haven for his tempest-tossed soul. He could not go to Paris because war was then going on between Richard and Philip Augustus; so to Lincoln he betook himself, where the famous scholar, William de Monte, was teaching theological science. There he remained for several years pursuing his studies.

But as Giraldus pathetically and parenthetically remarks, nothing upon earth is stable, nothing in the world immutable, nothing in life invariable. No amount of scholastic theology, no investigation of points of spiritual casuistry could ever smother the fire in his nature which was ever ready to burst forth into flame. In 1198, Peter de Laia, bishop of St. David's died. From this point began a controversy which made the next few years of our author's life anything but tranquil and studious ones; though with his constitutional enjoyment of a quarrel it is not impossible that those years were as happy in their way as any he spent.

The story is a long one to tell, and it is told very fully in another work; but the autobiography breaks off almost as soon as it is begun. The essential part of it is that Giraldus was elected to the vacant see by the canons of St. David's, and yielding either to the persuasions of others or to the promptings of his own vanity determined to insist upon its metropolitan rights, and secure the recognition of these from the pope. By this course of conduct he necessarily placed himself in open

hostility to both the court and the church of England. To Rome he journeyed in 1199, in order to prove the independence of St. David's to the head of the Christian world, and to receive directly from him the investiture. Innocent III., the greatest of the successors of St. Peter, was at that time in the second year of his pontificate. To him Giraldus presented six of his books, accompanying the gift with a play upon words, for which English furnishes no precise equivalent, to the effect that while others made their offerings in the form of *libras*, he made his in the form of *libros*. The pope was, as is well known, a learned man and a lover of literature; and Giraldus is careful to let us know how profoundly he was impressed with the value of the gift. The books he kept constantly by his bed for about a month, and was never weary of pointing out to the cardinals, who came to see him, the elegance of the style found in them and the excellence of the matter. The competition for their possession was naturally great. To five different cardinals the pope presented five of these books at their earnest entreaty. But there was one, the work entitled *Gemma Sacerdotalis* that he fancied most of all; and this he could not be persuaded to give up. In the meanwhile a letter came to Rome from Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, the determined enemy of Giraldus, giving to Innocent the view of the controversy held by the English court and church.

In the very middle of a sentence in this letter the autobiography abruptly breaks off. Whatever else was written has been lost, to all appearance irrecoverably. The details of the great controversy for the restoration of the rights and privileges of St. David's, into which Giraldus plunged with his whole heart, which took up several years of his life, which involved him in troubles and difficulties without end, and which resulted at last in failure, all these are told, as has been said, in another of his works. The story is a most curious and even fascinating one that he relates of his trials, his adventures, his escapes, his perils by land and by sea, in pursuit of this phantom which always eluded his grasp; but to recount it lies outside of the province of these papers. The result of it gave a death-blow to any hopes he may have had of further ecclesiastical

advancement; and after this he fades from our sight. He was the writer of many other works besides those which have been mentioned, all marked by the peculiarities of a personal vanity always entertaining, of constant quotation from himself, and of excessive credulity. In this last respect it was possible for him to have been worse. He believed everything; he might have believed nothing. As has been intimated, he repeats again and again what he has himself said elsewhere. But he has one advantage over most writers of this kind, that he repeats himself in precisely the same words, so that the conscientious student is saved the necessity of going through twice what is essentially the same thing in order to be absolutely certain that he has not been bored with it once. But after the settlement of the controversy with the archbishop of Canterbury we hear but little more of him, though he seems to have lived on nearly twenty years. In the period which intervened between the close of his struggle for St. David's and the time of his death, he doubtless had many bitter quarrels and controversies which, however trivial in themselves, were important enough in his own eyes; but the record of them, if such there were, has followed the fate which has fallen upon the memory of the brave men who lived before Agamemnon. He appears to have died somewhere in the neighborhood of 1220. Let us hope he found that rest in the grave which was denied him upon earth; that in the life beyond, that peace was furnished him in abundance, which it was rarely his fortune to have in what we know of his life here.

